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Latino Cultural Implications for Art Therapy: The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School

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The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School

By

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Abstract

Through art therapy, this research examines the influence of the main components of Latino culture as risk and/or protective factors for internalizing and externalizing behaviors and disorders in Latino adolescents. The goal of this research is to also identify how these factors impact academic performance for Latino high school students. First, a literature review examines preexisting research evaluating the presence and influence of particular cultural factors like family expectations and roles, gender, religion, language, and parental involvement in education. Non-cultural factors include peer influence and socioeconomic influences. The literature further examines the impact these factors have been found to influence internalizing and externalizing behaviors. No literature regarding the presentation of these cultural factors within art therapy was found. Second, data was collected from a case study conducted by the researcher with a Latino high school adolescent participating in school-based counseling within the art therapy modality and demonstrated internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Themes and symbols from the art created were analyzed and coded for the risk and/or protective qualities of each factor. Lastly, a discussion of findings guided by the literature review expands the meaning of the case study data and addresses five main areas: the protective or risk qualities of cultural themes and symbols within the art and art process, how the themes and symbols presented by the client can inform and guide treatment in relation to cultural factors, whether to examine these factors individually within treatment or in an integrated manner, and how this process played out within a cross-cultural therapeutic relationships.

Keywords: Art Therapy, Latino Cultural Risk Factors, Latino Cultural Protective Factors, Adolescence, Cultural Identity, Identity Formation

Disclaimer

This paper does not reflect the views of Loyola Marymount University nor the Department of Marital and Family Therapy. All client information has been disguised through the use of a pseudonym. Prior to data collection, a Human Subject Review Board (HSRB / IRB) approval for the research *Latino Cultural Implications for Art Therapy: The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School* was obtained. Appendix contains full IRB submission.

Dedication

This paper is dedicated to the late Dolores, for imparting such warmth, care, and development of my own identity.

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I would like to acknowledge Anthony Bodlovic for his guidance and support through this process. I would also like to thank "Jose" for his humor and energy.

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Introduction

Study Topic

This paper is a case study that aims to identify themes and symbols in the artwork of a Latino high school student demonstrating internalizing and externalizing behaviors and disorders. The goal is to identify these themes and symbols in relation to the cultural risk and protective factors recognized in the literature that influence academic performance. These factors include religion, language, gender, cultural family values, cultural family expectations, socioeconomic status and peer influence.

Significance of Study

It appears that there is minimal research exploring the influence of cultural factors on academic performance within the Latino community. For art therapy, literature is non-existent discussing the presence of themes or symbols in artwork to indicate clients grappling with the acculturation and assimilation processes and the influence these risk and protective factors have on the process. Therefore, this study aims to highlight the presence and impact of cultural factors on academic performance, particularly for students transitioning from middle to high school. The lack of literature describing efforts and ways to help these students adjust to the dominant culture within the academic environment communicates little understanding of the impact of cultural factors on academic performance, especially within the art therapy modality. The significance of identifying the influence of cultural risk factors on academic performance stems from the rising Latino population and drop out rate as well as the potential benefit of offering school based counseling services to these individuals and their families.

Background of Study Topic

In the Latino population, literature shows that cultural risk factors contribute to internalizing and externalizing behaviors and disorders, particularly after the transition from middle to high school (Zeiders, Roosa, Knight & Gonzales, 2013). The immigrant paradox—the false assumption that assimilated individuals often from generations born within the United States show higher success rates in terms of health, behavior, education and general well-being—has been found to show itself strongly during the high school age of adolescents (Crosnoe, 2012). Previously, literature recognized that school environments were believed to encourage social cohesion for immigrant students or students from immigrant families, however it is now believed that the traditional cultural values more greatly effect mental health and academic performance (Zeiders et al., 2013). The prominent cultural values discussed that contributes to externalizing and internalizing behaviors and disorders are generally referred to as risk factors (Sanders, Merrell and Cobb, 1999). This includes the values and expectations of the family or *familismo* (Sue and Sue, 2008), gender (Valenzuela, 1999; Sue & Sue, 2008; Liu, Gonzales, Fernandez, Millsap, & Dumka, 2011), religion (Liu et al., 2011), and language (Gonzales, German, Kim, George, Fabrett, Millsap & Dumka, 2008). Other prominent factors are peer influence (Zeiders et al., 2013), socioeconomic status (Estrada-Martinez, Caldwell, Schulz, Diez-Roux, & Pedraza, 2011; Hirschi, 1969), parental involvement in education (Mikolajczyk, Bredehorst, Khelaifat, Maier, & Maxwell, 2007), and socioeconomic status (Crosnoe, 2012).

The importance of this topic lies within how stress affects cultural minorities differently (Cohen and Smerdon, 2009) causing psychological decline (Gonzales, German, Kim, George, Fabrett, Millsap & Dumka, 2008). It is identified in many sources that the U.S. Latino population

is quickly growing (Zeiders et al. 2013) and is at a higher risk for depressive symptoms and mental health issues, at rates almost twice as high as Non-Latino Whites (Mikolajczyk et al., 2007). Major depressive disorder and anxiety related disorders are encompassed by the internalizing disorders while conduct disorders or oppositional defiant disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, and posttraumatic stress disorder are encompassed by the externalizing disorders (Zeiders et al., 2013; Garrison et al., 1999).

The art therapy literature communicates very little regarding interventions or information collected for this population. Most literature concentrated in the areas of seeking treatment and implications for treatment like psychoeducation and the language gap between psychological terms and translation (Barrera & Gonzalez, 2013). Although minimal research exists, four benefits to art therapy have been identified by Kahn (1999): emotional expression, decrease in defenses through the use of imagery, reduced perception of art therapist as authoritarian, and the encouragement of positive therapeutic experience. As literature shows from a general adolescent perspective, art therapy encourages identity formation and self-awareness, which can reduce the presence of externalizing and internalizing behaviors (Garrison, Roy, & Azar, 1999). Due to the lack of art therapy literature pertaining to the identification of themes and symbols in this population's artwork, the mental health field would greatly benefit from research that deepens the understanding of cultural risk factors and their influence on the high school Latino population. Possible outcomes may include early intervention policies and programs that encourage empathy and understanding towards these students and clients (Crosnoe & Turley, 2011).

Literature Review

Introduction

This literature review examines cultural risk factors that are seen to affect the middle to high school transition, resulting in decreased academic performance amongst Latino high school students (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009). It was previously believed that education played a key role in acculturation and social mobility in the United States by allowing individuals an opportunity to be exposed to common social practices (Mikolajczyk, Bredehorst, Khelaifat, Maier, & Maxwell, 2007). School settings are viewed as an environment conducive to assimilation where social cohesion is encouraged. However, it is now being recognized that the tension between traditional cultural values and the dominant culture are affecting educational outcomes and academic performance for individuals experiencing this tension. The importance of this topic stems from the rising Latino population accounting for close to one-fourth of the U.S. population due to high birthrate and ongoing immigration patterns (Zeiders, Roosa, Knight & Gonzales, 2013). In the research literature, it is evident that there are more risk factors than protective factors working against this group of adolescents, including contextual and developmental factors within school and cultural influences like the expectations of the family, gender roles (Valenzuela, 1999), familial values, religion and language (Gonzales, German, Kim, George, Fabrett, Millsap & Dumka, 2008). Another important aspect is the role of peer influence. Although it does not stem from culture, it is important to consider for identity formation purposes, which occurs during this stage of life (Zeiders et al., 2013). For some Latino adolescents, it is thought that the compounding effects these experiences and risk factors have during this transition period can lead to externalizing or internalizing behaviors, eventually leading to mental health difficulties if not addressed. This literature review thus explores the

cultural factors that contribute to internalizing and externalizing symptoms for Latino adolescents and their implication on academic performance. Although minimal art therapy literature exists examining its impact on treatment with this population, the literature review will examine how it can help illuminate the factors at play.

Education

The academic difficulties that are present in this population are influenced by stress in many areas. For one, Cohen and Smerdon (2009) identify that this transition period of middle to high school affects racial and ethnic groups differently, with a higher dropout rate and reduced academic performance in the Latino population. Similarly, Crosnoe and Turley (2011) discuss that the transition places stress on cultural minorities, particularly for Latino groups, resulting in a drop in academic performance and absenteeism. Gonzales et al. (2008) verify in their research that more traditional youth—defined by maintaining traditional cultural values—view education as a way to successfully fulfill their cultural duties to support family, seeking education as a way to access greater financial gain.

It is discussed by Gonzales et al. (2008) that transitional periods also mark a greater decline in psychological functioning, possibly due to family obligations embedded in cultural values. It was found this is especially true if the school is located in urban neighborhoods with a low-income demographic, distinguishing this environment and chronological age as a time for the development or exacerbation of externalizing behavior later discussed under mental health. As the research by Gonzales et al. quantifies that there is a difficulty transitioning, Cohen and Smerdon (2009) look to describe the existence of this difficulty through contextual, developmental and organizational factors effecting social, emotional, and academic performances in a variety of ways.

Contextual, developmental, and organizational stressors. Cohen & Smerdon (2009) illustrate that during adolescence, individuals are working on solidifying their identity and independence. McGann describes (2006) through the natural adolescent identity development process "opposing self-images [created through opposing cultural attitudes] will not exist together" (p. 200). Instead, the adolescent will "split themselves from the negative self-image" becoming the "hated part of themselves" (p. 200). McGann continues that at the same time they are navigating how to contribute to family, society, and community as well as navigating sexual and social stress as a part of the adolescent developmental stage. McGann also indicates that amid these changes, self-esteem may fall while there is an increase in academic stress and fears of new social situations.

The developmental factors at play are twofold, including the biological changes occurring in the body and the aforementioned family's expectations for adolescent responsibility. During high times of stress, the research done by Cohen and Smerdon (2009) highlighted that the physical and chemical changes of the body due to puberty can exacerbate the fears of social changes and low self-esteem. Although this may be a normal occurrence for this stage of life, the confusion is heightened in the Latino population who are also coming into a cultural and developmental stage of family responsibility. McGann (2006) more closely looks at the adolescent identity formation and influences, quoting Erik Erikson (1975a) that the formation of identity is contingent on the "mutual relation between self-sameness and persistent sharing of some kind of essential character with others" (p. 179). McGann pinpoints that standards are communicated through culture, including ideas of value, beauty, and acceptance, and that adolescents develop opinions and beliefs based on these standards in order to seek affirmation. As described by Erikson, adolescents thus begin to create an understanding of their place within

culture. In this case, McGann explains this process is complicated by the presence of two cultures. As Sue and Sue (2008) state, difficulties thus arise when societal and cultural expectations differ.

Lastly, logistical changes discussed by Cohen and Smerdon (2009) in moving from middle to high school, termed "organizational differences," are defined as the experienced change in the structure and dynamics of school (p. 179). The most striking adjustment includes moving to a new or different part of campus along with a new peer group and unfamiliar teachers and staff. Furthermore, movement between classes is dissimilar, where as in middle school students generally move as a class and have less freedom. Conversely, high school students have different academic tracks, lessening the peer cohesion that is more easily facilitated in middle school by moving between classes with the same peers. Along with increased course work and responsibility, there is also a new level of competition between students with the presence of extracurricular activities. These organizational differences may also be contributing to issues surrounding self-esteem and feeling included in the community, as discussed by Cohen and Smerdon, possibly presenting in the form of isolation or difficulty interacting with peers. Returning to considering contextual factor influence, McGann (2013) sustains that the development of authentic self is affirmed by those around the individual, emphasizing that the community—in this case school employees, teachers, staff, etc.—impacts the individual and either affirms or denies their perceived inclusion.

Interplay of risk factors on academic performance and transitioning. In the literature, many approaches to analyzing the potential role of risk factors in internalizing and externalizing behaviors as related to culture in an academic setting are present. Recent research advocates looking at risk factors as they interact with each other. Mikolajczyk et al. (2007)

define acculturation to refer to "the process whereby the attitudes and/or behaviors of persons from one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different culture" (p. 2). Their study aimed to correlate "demographic factors, acculturation, social support, and depressive symptoms" through univariate and multivariate analysis by looking at these components individually and as a whole (p. 2). The univariate analysis identified significant risk for depressive symptoms in females receiving less support at home, school and living below 200% poverty level. In the multivariate analysis, however, individuals with low acculturation were at a higher risk. Factors like poverty level and a lack of a support system did not remain as predictors for depressive symptoms, however, little support at school, being female, low acculturation and living in a single parent household remained constant. Like the multivariate analysis in the Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) study, Crosnoe and Turley (2011) research shows the complexity of risk factors and that researchers and clinicians should consider the compounding effect of these factors.

Elaborating on ways to look at risk factors, Zeiders et al. (2013) indicate that the focus of most studies is to look at socio-cultural risk factors individually and not to study the compounding effects of risk factors over time. Therefore, they further delineate that the co-occurrence of these themes with associated risk factors points to patterns, for instance high risk of mental health symptoms was associated with deviant peers and peer conflict. Although the goal of identifying risk profiles for Zeiders et al. aims to shift to looking at the compounding effects of risk factors, they also advocate monitoring risk factors on a selective level in order to have more concise interventions to monitor and adjust the specific risk factors at play. The results from Zeiders et al. discussing the presence of externalizing and internalizing behaviors and associated disorders show that less dominant acculturated individuals demonstrated higher

cultural strengths. These cultural strengths may have prevented them from "internalizing and externalizing symptoms, while greater acculturation to mainstream U.S. values has been linked to poorer mental health outcomes" (p. 610).

Gonzales et al. (2008) study revealed that in academic environments, students that felt encouraged to tap into their traditional cultural values had reduced external behaviors and an increase in academic engagement. Through the study it was determined that if the mother and the student were both born in their country of family origin, they maintained a positive relationship to that cultural orientation and the student demonstrated less externalized behaviors and an increase in academic achievement. Garrison, Roy, and Azar (1999) also indicate that often the mental health of the child is directly correlated with the mental health of the mother. Socioeconomic status, described by Gonzales et al., although correlated to recent immigration, did not have significant reliability in effecting behavior or achievement. Questions that surface in terms of the effects of acculturation and assimilation of youth into the dominant culture developing externalized behaviors arise. This includes the possibility that the shared experience of the family may be changing through the assimilation and acculturation of the student in school. Literature currently does not exist to substantiate this.

Cultural Factors and Mental Health

Mental health concerns for this population begin with influencing factors of the adolescent age. Zeiders et al. (2013) discuss mental health symptoms across all adolescents in the United States with research indicating that up to 20% of the adolescent population will develop a mental disorder before the age of 25. It is further discussed that the Latino population of the U.S. is "the fastest growing ethnic minority group in the U.S." of which "63% of this population is from Mexico" drawing importance to the need for understanding this population and what the

clinical needs are (p. 603). Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) discuss that the risk of depressive symptoms in Latinos is twice as high as Non-Latino Whites. Sue and Sue (2008) address that physical and mental health are rarely cared for in this population due to fears of being discovered as undocumented immigrants as well as cultural influences such as religion and gender roles. Furthermore, external resources to the family (i.e. mental health services or care) are sought out after family and extended family are consulted, primarily relying on family support to work through difficulties instead of seeking outside services.

Participating practitioners identified in the Barrera and Gonzalez (2013) study that mental health concerns in the Latino population were often described as *problemas,* or problems. In understanding how to best address mental health concerns with this population, particularly Spanish speaking, Barrera and Gonzalez describe the importance of creating common knowledge of psychological terms, discussing how clinical treatment and psychoeducation are impacted by the cultural understanding of particular terms. This term generally encompassed stress and overwhelm in individuals that felt they were responsible for everything, including family (pp. 7-8). The most common descriptive words to surface in their study were *depresión* (depression), *ansiedad* (anxiety), and *nervios* (nerves). Although "nerves" in the English language underneath the umbrella of psychotherapy can describe worry and anxiousness, *nervios* is more intense in the Latino culture, identifying extreme anxiety and worry accompanied by a somatic response. This somatic response may include a shortness of breath, however is different from a panic attack. For example, this can be seen in the DSM IV TR's (2000) cultural terminology, where the saying *attaque de nervios* "often occurs as a direct result of a stressful event relating to the family" (p. 899). Clinically, this terminology may resemble panic attacks however the cultural significance and explanation is different. Particularly, there tends to be a precipitating event and

an "absence of fear or apprehension" to distinguish it from panic attacks or Panic Disorder (p. 899).

Another anxiety term, *me bloqueo*, refers to the first person denial of a situation thus interfering with concentration and connecting with others. Often somatic representations of symptomology manifest in the form of stomach pain resembling chronic gastrointestinal issues, termed as *empacho*. General cultural feelings towards mental health surround the ideas of *frustración* (frustration) and *coraje* (anger). Often, feelings of *frustración* presented frequently when clients attempted to identify surrounding feelings of mental illness not wanting to "feel embarrassed" in the study by Barrera and Gonzalez. *Coraje* presented when clients felt out of control and then questioned "*porque me pasa a mi?* meaning "why does this happen to me?" For many of the clients described in the Barrera and Gonzalez (2013) article, identifying, accepting, and acknowledging mental health struggles were perceived as impediments to fulfill cultural expectations, particularly for women fulfilling the domestic needs of the family and financial obligations for men.

Internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Zeiders et al. (2013) identifies risk factors for fifth grade Mexican American students in a longitudinal study. Although this longitudinal study identified risk factors in younger individuals, the study advocates interventions in this age group as mental health disorder preventative efforts. It also implies interventions for subsequent development of these symptoms upon the transitional entrance to high school. The use of the terms *internalizing* and *externalizing* behaviors and disorders presented in the literature are terms generalized to describe types of behaviors seen in adolescents. Sanders, Merrell and Cobb (1999) clarify the meaning of these terms. *Internalizing behavior* is identified as behaviors that are self-directed and usually include a covert cognitive process. Progression often leads to *internalizing*

disorders, resulting in emotional despair and social isolation. Thought process is negative, particularly towards the self, and increases risk for social withdrawal, poor self-esteem and suicidal ideation. *Externalizing behaviors* are disruptive and deviant with aggression and impulsivity resulting from an overt cognitive process. These types of disorders are categorized by acting-out behaviors.

The research by Zeiders et al. (2013) identifies associated disorders to these two types of behaviors. Common internalizing disorders include major depressive disorder at 5-8% and anxiety related disorders at 6-10%, while externalizing disorders included conduct disorders or oppositional defiant disorder at 6-8% and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at 3-6% prevalence. The students were assessed and assigned risk profiles— low risk, medium risk, and high risk—according to mental health symptomatology in the fifth grade and then reevaluated in the seventh grade. The study identified risk profiles to be family, peer, and socio-cultural risk that subsequently effect adjustment to environment. The risk factors to be discussed are looked at in regards to how they manifest internalizing and externalizing behaviors and disorders. As mentioned before, Zeiders et al. (2013) discussed the importance of looking at the compounding effects of these risk factors but also advocate monitoring risk factors on a selective level for concise interventions. The factors believed to have a role in academic performance being examined include parental and family cultural expectations of adolescents, gender, religion, socioeconomic status, language, peer influence, and parent involvement in education and will therefore be reviewed individually (Zeiders et al, 2013).

Parental and family cultural expectations of adolescent school children. Before discussing specific cultural factors it is important to identify the most important cultural value: family. Sue and Sue (2008) detail that Latino cultural values revolve around interpersonal

relationships between the family members, which includes neighbors, friends, and extended family. *Familismo* refers to the family unit and entails respect and loyalty to those considered family. Within this large family structure, there is a strong hierarchy where each family member maintains a role. For instance, children are to be obedient, grandparents provide wisdom, the mother disciplines, and the father provides financially. Respect, loyalty, and cooperation for family members are instilled into children at an early age. In research conducted by Garrison et al. (2009), however, families that emigrated to the U.S. are experiencing a change in the traditional family hierarchy resulting in blurred generational boundaries and an increase in stress. Many individuals emigrated with the intention of finding social mobility and higher pay, however many are coming from rural areas with different job skills making it difficult to find urban jobs. It is speculated in Crosnoe and Turley's (2011) work that for this reason the performance gap between Latino adolescent students and other groups begins before entering school. It was found that types of families and individuals emigrating to the U.S. also come from lower socioeconomic status in pursuit of social mobility and improved standard of living. As a result, Garrison et al. (2009) identify that there is a shift in family roles due to women being able to find jobs more easily than the men. Furthermore, it is discussed by Garrison et al. that more expectation is placed on children to contribute to the family unit, often interfering with school from an emotional and financial standpoint. Many adolescents understand the family expectation however their academic performance is affected. Valenzuela (1999) encountered adolescent individuals that were fully aware of the family's financial situation and would contribute all or most of their paycheck towards the family unit.

In terms of seeking help, Sue and Sue (2008) identify that often outside help is not sought until all family resources, including extended family and friends, are consulted. Thus, evidence

from the research done by Liu, Gonzales, Fernandez, Millsap, and Dumka (2011) suggests the most prominent stressor on Latino adolescents comes from family-related events. It is understood by adolescents that it is a part of the cultural expectation to help solve family problems. Gonzales et al. (2008) research shows that the cultural pull to provide for family and assist with familial obligation often motivates adolescents to pursue education. Although education is understood to be important, Liu et al. (2011) further describe that it is a part of the cultural norm for adolescents to actively pursue and solve family issues as well. It was also found that coping skills begin to deteriorate when family stressors are "felt to be too significant and beyond emotional or behavioral capacities" of the adolescent, yet they continue to feel obligated to tackle the issue at hand (385). It is also identified that this can be a chance for adolescents to provide for their family and an opportunity to take control and play an active role leading to coping efficacy and resilience as well as independence.

Gender. Gender roles play an important part in Latino homes. Sue and Sue (2008) indicate that *machismo* is a term to describe the strong and dominant nature of men as providers for the family. Boys begin to fall into this mold as they approach adolescence. Liu et al. (2011) further recognize that gender roles may affect coping strategies seen in this population. The male responsibilities can be interpreted as less accessible due to the cultural expectation to provide financially for the family.

The pressure of having to find a job—to perform outside of the family domicile—may contribute to the higher levels of stress and subsequent externalizing behaviors as Liu et al. (2011) discuss. Liu et al. continue to describe that other difficulties of gender for males include *machismo*, where it is culturally acceptable and expected of men to demonstrate "independence, virility, and capability" (p. 394). It could be that symptomology expresses itself due to feelings

of inadequacy, shifting the male adolescents from using active coping strategies or support seeking strategies that may challenge *machismo* and be a sign of weakness. Furthermore, Zeiders et al. (2013) state it is possible due to the behavioral expectations as defined by the male Latino culture influence adolescent males to present greater externalizing behaviors and disorders.

Sue and Sue (2008) detail *marianismo*, the female version of *machismo*. It infers that women are nurturing, submissive to men, and self-sacrificing. Valenzuela (1999) researched gender roles of adolescent males and females presenting in the homes of recently immigrated families. In her study, girls were given larger degrees of independence, credibility, and responsibility upon the assertion of themselves within their American home and often played a dominant role in settling into the new home. Although boys shared some of the responsibilities in the home they were not expected to in the same extent as their sisters. Female adolescents are traditionally expected to help aid family stress through childcare, household duties, and providing social support in the absence of parents as described by Liu et al (2011). Girls also served as translators more often than their brothers, as well as mediators and surrogate parents. Their efforts are rewarded with household privileges or tasks, as well as given hierarchical power over siblings. As Liu et al. discuss, girls were expected to uphold household activities than the boys and often became in charge of the home.

Zeiders et al. (2013) research demonstrated that adolescent females were more prone to internalizing disorders. The effects of gender roles on coping strategies and handling stress are thus implied. As discussed by Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) gender was found to be a repeated factor for the presence of depressive symptoms, particularly for females and the tendency for internalizing disorders to present. Liu et al. (2011) pursued to define the involvement of coping strategies in the process of internalizing symptoms and externalizing symptoms and behaviors. It

was found that for female adolescents, as family stress in the home increased—defined by events that caused family stress—active coping skills like problem solving or seeking understanding resulted in a decrease in internalizing symptoms. For male adolescents, however, active coping skills decreased as family stress increased.

Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) further indicate differences between gender experiences, particularly in single parent homes. For male adolescents, low support at home was a risk factor for poor academic performance and increased externalizing behavior. For females, this was not a risk factor, but low family income and ethnicity were risk factors for poor academic performance and internalizing behavior.

Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) continue to discuss that levels of acculturation also influence gender roles, where stronger ties to native culture more greatly influence culturally appropriate behaviors. However, in the urban class, traditional roles are decreasing much more rapidly, most likely attributable to women acting independently outside of the home. This may cause anxiety in men, who feel they should be the sole provider according to more traditional values and may cause stress within the family's home. It is possible that this may be felt by the adolescent's to be "too significant and beyond emotional or behavioral control" as mentioned by Liu et al (2011) and further contribute to symptomology and thus poor academic performance. Overall, the tension between *familismo* (Sue & Sue, 2008) and wanting to integrate themselves into school as well as create a sense of self (Cohen & Smerdon, 2009) becomes difficult, where the assimilation, acculturation, and societal integration opportunities offered in school may directly conflict with cultural expectations to provide for the family.

Religion. Religion is identified as an integral part of culturally defining the Latino population and is acknowledged as a coping strategy by Liu et al. (2011) particularly when

handling family stressors. However, the use of religious coping is much more prominent in adult literature than in children and adolescents. In this particular study, religious coping is assessed in terms of psychological symptom relief. However, using religion as a coping mechanism became associated with negative effect, as if religious coping was being used to "disengage, relinquishing responsibility and control to the higher power and further inhibiting self-reliant forms of coping and capability" (p. 394). Religion was also identified by Gonzales et al. (2008) as a protective factor against deviant behavior by making adolescents feel they had more situational control and therefore a stronger investment in education.

Language. De Anda (1984) details the different language levels that contribute to increasing or hindering the socialization process into the dominant culture. Using language as a determining factor of assimilation process is an approach that is no longer considered to be person-centered, as discussed by Zeiders et al. (2013). De Anda, however, identifies the difficulty non-bilingual individuals have when attempting to function in a society dominated by a foreign language. She details that the majority of foreign language speakers operate on a language "continuum ranging from monolingual to varying degrees of subordinate bilingualism" (p. 106). Sue and Sue (2008) agree, indicating that although most Latino students are bilingual, it is often the case that mastery over both languages is limited, particularly among second generation Latino students. Language capability and competence is further detailed by De Anda to help determine the degree to which socialization experiences can occur, for instance seeking mental health treatment. Language can also enhance the dissimilarities present between individuals of different cultures, termed interferences, which include accents or grammatical mistakes. Within the school setting this could contribute to peer dynamics as well as internalizing and externalizing behaviors (Zeiders et al., 2013).

In the research conducted by Zeiders et al. (2013), individuals from Mexico who recently immigrated demonstrated moderate-risk profiles for externalizing behaviors when considering language difficulties. However, Crosnoe and Turley (2011) identify that proficiency in native language has a tendency to encourage English proficiency and raise test scores and academic performance when the languages are being learned simultaneously. The level of pressure and stress placed on adolescents to help parents assimilate and survive within another culture implies the degrees of stress and obligation adolescents may feel and therefore impede on academic performance (Zeiders et al.).

Parental involvement in education. Although parents of the Latino population instill obedience and respect for authority in their children and recognize the complementary roles of families and schools in *educación* (education), it seems that academic readiness is difficult to instill. Parental involvement in the school environment has a tendency to decrease as children age, however, it is key for a successful transition into high school as discussed by Cohen and Smerdon (2009).

It is not uncommon for parents of many cultural groups to have a lessened presence during high school. Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) identified low support at school as the strongest risk factor for depressive symptoms for both males and females. Behaviors from school teachers and other staff that communicated support was delineated by the study participants to included "availability of teacher or adult, noticing when the student was not there, listening to the student when they had something to say, reinforced performance, wanting the student to do their best, and noticing when the student was having difficult or in a bad mood. It is identified in Leventhal, Brooks-Gunn, and Xue (2006) that Latino parenting that communicates this same encouragement of autonomy "in the context of warmth is positively associated with children's achievement" (p.

1371). It is argued that due to the general low socioeconomic status of this population, this parenting practice is impacted resulting in more controlled home environments less conducive to self-exploration and autonomy. Although school staff support is not encompassed under familial culture implications, its influence on academic performance and meeting the needs of students is important to improve academic achievement and dropout rates.

Non-cultural factor: peers. It is important to note that the influence of peer relationships during adolescence is particularly present within school dynamics. Therefore, although it is not specifically a cultural risk or protective factor, it should not be forgotten particularly when accounting for treatment considerations.

Zeiders et al. (2013) research indicates peer relationships and the presence of deviant peers in school as a risk factor. This includes experiencing discrimination as well as linguistic challenges when confronted with peers who have already acculturated and assimilated into the school environment and are bilingual or in an environment of their primary language. In the research, mental health conditions tended to appear in 11% of the participants with larger language difficulties. McGann (2006) describes that generally the creation of sense of self for adolescents relies on affirmation and feedback from surrounding peers. Therefore, difficult peer relationships as talked about by Zeiders et al. could very possibly negatively influence the sense of self.

Ream and Rumberger (2008) also consider the types of relationships, linking academic performance and behavior to school-oriented and street-oriented peer relationships. The defining characteristic between these two is the motivation and drive found within a group of school-oriented peers, which has a tendency to positively affect others and keeps students in school. However, attention needs to be placed on the coexistence of these two groups within the school

setting and its influence. Ream and Rumberger identify this as a risk to peers and drop out rates, as well as academic performance in the Latino population. Difficulty of initiating and maintaining peer relationships is presented by Mikolajczyk et al. (2007), delineating that depressed adolescents may be less inclined to seek and form supportive relationships with peers or adults in the school setting. Furthermore, they are more likely to attribute their relationships as supportive and therefore demonstrate less support seeking behaviors.

For individuals that choose to drop out, concerns arise for the types of community that is being built once they drop out. This may have implications for future generations in terms of socioeconomic status, jobs, and available resources to name a few. Research by Ream and Rumberger (2008) shows that "academically disengaged students tend to develop street-oriented friendships, while academically engaged students tend to befriend others who also make schooling a priority" (p. 109). It is within the academically engaged students that drop out rates are much less, however, Latino populations tend to be much less engaged creating a higher risk to drop out regardless. Ream and Rumberger discuss that only slightly more than 50% of Latino students graduate high school with a diploma. Further concern presents when considering that "dropouts are twice as likely to be unemployed" (p. 109). Individuals that do find jobs tend to be paid much less and are presented with minimal upward mobility within position, hindering access to health insurance. This may also prove a concern for the cultural expectations of the family, where as it has been described, are expected to contribute financially particularly for males.

Non-cultural factor: socioeconomic status. Crosnoe (2012) describes that the immigrant paradox—the finding that newly immigrated individuals are more successful than assimilated individuals—is found to hold truest among high school students with socioeconomic

status being held constant. Estrada-Martinez, Caldwell, Schulz, Diez-Roux, and Pedraza (2011) identify within their study three different factors that play into socioeconomic status: family cohesion, parental engagement, and adolescent autonomy within the neighborhood environment on adolescent behavior. This study particularly looked to identify links between socioeconomic status and neighborhood racial/ethnic compositions and its effects on adolescent youth. It was found that Latinos are at a higher risk for violent behaviors when family dynamics (parent availability in particular) and neighborhood characteristics were accounted for (p. 224). In Los Angeles neighborhoods where there was a concentration of similar socioeconomic status families, a higher prominence or aggressive behaviors was found when the neighborhood socioeconomic status was accounted for. Comparing Latino adolescent behavior within predominantly White neighborhoods and in ethnically mixed neighborhoods, Mexican adolescents presented a higher risk for violent behaviors (p. 229). Thus, neighborhood socioeconomic status became a positively associated risk for Latino youth. However, for Mexican youth living within predominantly Latino neighborhoods there was no increased risk for delinquent behavior serving as a protective factor for externalizing behaviors.

Within neighborhood socioeconomic status, Estrada-Martinez et al. (2011) found family cohesion as a protective factor against the occurrence of delinquent behavior with low neighborhood socioeconomic status. In opposition to Hirschi (1969), Estrada-Martinez et al. indicate that their findings contrast with the social control theoretical idea that family cohesion and environmental factors greatly influence individual behaviors. Hirschi therefore posits that within social control, family can serve as a protective factor against environmental risks. It was found by Estrada-Martinez (2011) that adolescents in lower socioeconomic status Latino neighborhoods with higher reports of parental engagement were at increased risk for violent

behaviors compared with lower parental engagement (p. 236). Although the mechanism behind this is unclear, Estrada-Martinez et al. believe that parents of adolescents they felt were at risk for these behaviors located resources. In addition to parental engagement, it was found that parental respect towards the adolescent's autonomy in higher socioeconomic status communities resulted in an increase in behavioral risk. Again, Estrada-Martinez et al. purported this may be due to the parent's committing more time to jobs instead of oversight.

Seeking Treatment

Treatment begins with the importance of psychoeducation when working with the Latino high school population as presented by Barrera and Gonzalez (2013). It is identified by Barrera and Gonzalez that there is a language gap where the translation of diagnostic, assessment and treatment terms from English to Spanish do not always convey an accurate meaning. Furthermore, using psychiatric or medical terms may be even more difficult to convey, where often times there is no equivalent word in Spanish to convey the same aspects of treatment. Other cultural implications for treatment described by Barrera and Gonzalez may include spiritual and religious belief systems, for instance one explanation of mental illness is *castigo de Dios,* meaning that the mental illness is a punishment from God, or *brujeria*, meaning witchcraft.

Barrera and Gonzalez (2013) discuss that many fears for the Latino population arise when considering seeking mental health treatment for any age group may be grounded in cultural values. This can include difficulty accepting the illness, subsequent stigma and the possible side effects of medication. Other concerns noted include the possible difficulty of interacting with others due to diagnosis and therefore a change in their societal role. As discussed previously, the collective effort to provide for the family poses another concern, feeling that finding work or getting married may be more difficult with mental health treatment or diagnosis due to stigma.

Many undocumented Latinos have legal concerns, including the removal of children from the home due to differing parenting ideals regarding physical means for behavior correction, as well as the idea of another barrier impeding on citizenship if they are undocumented.

Art therapy. Literature defining the benefits of using art therapy with adolescent Latino students is minimal, however, benefits of using art therapy with adolescents indicates four ways in which it helps adolescents. Kahn (1999) discusses that art therapy encourages adolescents to identify and express emotions and to encourage a positive therapeutic experience. It is also recognized that the use of images and art decreases the defenses of the individual and in turn encourages the adolescent to not look at the therapist from an authoritarian role. In relation to this particular topic, the art therapy literature discussing the presence of risk factors and cultural influences is minimal. Although some of the risk factors addressed above were included in this literature, they were not the primary focus of the research. Art therapy literature concerning the adolescent population experiencing the transition between middle and high school was not found, however exploring general identity development during adolescence is easily found.

An article that dealt with identity formation for adolescents of different minorities shed light on organizing a group art therapy experience. Slayton (2012) conducted an art therapy group with male adolescents from trauma backgrounds, some of which were Latino. Although the demographic of her group is not purely Latino, she speaks to the inherent difficulties adolescents face when trying to pull strengths from the different communities they are attempting to enmesh themselves in. This entails that each group—peer groups, gangs, school, churches—has a different set of rules and behavioral expectations that often conflict with other groups in the adolescent's life, much like the tension between societal and cultural expectations discussed by Sue and Sue (2008). Slayton indicates that aggressive, externalizing behaviors may

be stemming from a lack of structure in the adolescent's life. She argues that a fragmented self-state is due to failed attachments and a lack of family support when may be caused by the role reversal identified by Garrison et al. (1999). Mikolajczyk et al. (2007) implies this in speaking to the adolescent's perceived support from adults in the school system, where Slayton would argue that difficulties of feeling supported and heard greatly contribute to isolative behaviors and low self-esteem. Other behaviors and feelings discussed by Slayton include powerlessness, rage, sadness, and fear.

Slayton (2012) states the goal of the art therapy group was to allow the group members a chance to express their cultural values and opinions freely without judgment. Her approach was based in techniques founded by Kramer where "the art therapist must try to establish the minimum of order and serenity necessary for creative work and at the same time avoid excessively constricting discipline that would stifle expression" (p. 180). The art thus served the role to create empathic interactions between group members through curiosity and openness, allowing an opportunity for the sharing of each other's experiences by creating a city within which many cultures resided. Although this article demonstrates concerns relating to adolescence and transitioning into different cultural groups, metaphors and symbols are not discussed nor found in the description of the artwork in the literature.

Treatment concerns. There are very few literature sources that divulge information regarding Latino understanding of the causes of mental health. Barrera and Gonzalez (2013) identify that the practitioners often heard clients blame family members for their mental illness, believing they inherited it from family or attributed it to religion. Religion also provided understanding by believing it was part of God's will and that God was punishing them—*castigo de Dios*—or spiritual practices. Sue and Sue (2008) discuss the problem-solving behaviors that

can be reinforced through religion to evoke God's support. Employing phrases in therapy like *ayudate, que Dios te ayudara*, meaning "God helps those who help themselves," will remind the client to use their traditional religious values and to not discourage their use, but to also instill a sense of ownership over treatment (p. 9). Within the school setting, Cohen & Smerdon (2009) identify that therapy may want to address encouraging parental involvement in high school transitional phase, opening discussion about peer groups, school activities, and academic performance. Communication between parents and teachers is equally important for families to achieve better understanding of their child as well as the influencing factors.

Due to language barriers, Crosnoe and Turley (2011) discuss how family involvement in the school based setting is usually limited and that language is often not an adequate tool to gage assimilation and acculturation levels. However, they discuss how mastery of the English language opens opportunities for community and institutional help. Often, the parents' cultural preoccupation is to prepare adolescents to be hard workers and conscientious for the care of their elders. However, it is clinically significant to reiterate to parents the importance of parental involvement in education and to broaden ways of becoming involved. Sue and Sue (2008) consider cultural values in the treatment process, identifying the need to assess family structure. Most importantly, Sue and Sue discuss that conflicts among family members most often seem to exist due to different levels of acculturation between generations.

Benefits of school-based services. Garrison et al. (1999) discuss that working within a school-based setting affords clinicians with a unique opportunity. It is within this environment that a client-centered and humanistic approaches can be utilized to meet the client where they are currently at. As school clinicians, "a single point of access to mental health services can take place in a familiar, non-threatening environment with less stigma attached to treatment"

(Garrison et al., 1999, p. 208). As previously discussed by Barrera and Gonzalez (2013), Latino families may not seek treatment due to stigma of mental health, therefore advocating the importance of school-based services. Garrison et al. suggest that parents are more receptive to school-based services because they have initially come looking to benefit their child's academic performance. Garrison et al. also identify this is particularly true for families with less financial capital to pay for services, particularly for early intervention purposes.

McGann (2006) cites clinician's knowledge of cultural background of client as imperative to working with this population in order to avoid being a color-blind therapist. Possible countertransference is also discussed with a therapist coming from either the dominant culture or from a culture separate from the client. The possibility of the "client's unconscious identification to the therapist as similarities or differences may present themselves as defense mechanisms" is noted (p. 206). Furthermore, McGann delineates the importance of the art therapist's self-awareness during session in response to the visual cues that may present in the artwork. This possibly indicates unresolved biases or prejudices and the importance for the art therapist to use their own art to help navigate these aspects. However, particular symbols or themes connected to these risk factors does not present in the art therapy literature for this population.

Diagnoses. As previously indicated by Zeiders et al. (2013), there are prevalent diagnoses within this population, including the common internalizing disorders of major depressive disorder and anxiety related disorders. Externalizing disorders included conduct disorders or oppositional defiant disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Additionally, Garrison et al. (1999) discuss that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is also being identified within this population. It is indicated that compounding effects of risk factors

can show symptoms in terms of cognitive delays, school difficulty, concentration difficulty, anxiety, depression and regressive behaviors. Furthermore, Garrison et al. discuss the importance of collecting information concerning parental mental health, since it was often found that the mental health status of immigrant children was strongly linked to the mental health status of parents. It was found this was particularly true regarding the mother, where often the mental health stability of the mother directly affected the student's mental health and relatedly their academic performance.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the literature speaks to the need for specialty programs to be placed in school systems to help with systematic issues promoting high drop out rates. Helping high school students become self-aware, providing psychoeducation, and feeling supported through school-based counseling and therapy may help reduce internalizing and externalizing behaviors. As discussed by Garrison et al. (1999), using the art process with adolescents helps students become self-aware to reduce internalizing and externalizing behaviors. Bringing self-awareness and empathy to the high school environment surrounding what Sue and Sue (2008) term as a conflict between cultural and societal expectations may decrease symptomatic behaviors by reducing stress levels through understanding. It is further important to remember the organic development of self during adolescence when, as Erikson (1975a) termed, the relationship between self-sameness and the sharing of characteristics with other groups because the backbone to identity development. Crosnoe and Turley (2011) further identify the need for policies and programs to help this specific population, citing that "American job opportunities have evolved from entry-level jobs, specifically manufacturing jobs that employed high school graduates, to a high-tech service economy requiring postsecondary education" (p. 131). Ream and Rumberger (2008) also acknowledge this shift from the production of goods to information-oriented jobs. As Gonzales et al. (2008) discuss, pursuing further education beyond the high school level may be difficult, particularly since increased acculturation, often defined by mastery of the English language, leads to a greater risk for the development of externalizing problems. Barrera and Gonzalez (2013) further describe risk factors for the development of mental illness to include stress concerning employment, which further influences access to health care to manage these behaviors and diagnosis.

In order for clinicians to begin considering how they can provide for their clients, the implication these cultural factors have on academic performance, the solidification of identity, and level of acculturation need to be considered. Although minimal art therapy literature currently exists, present literature advocates its value in enabling students to begin understanding their cultural identity in relation to their native culture and American culture to reduce symptomatic expression of internal cultural conflicts. Future research for art therapy may include identifying symbols or metaphors in the artwork to help breakdown where the client is experiencing tension between society and specific cultural factors. In order to consider how this information can inform treatment and the creation of appropriate treatment plans.

Research Approach

This case study has been conducted from an arts-based, ethnographic approach. As described by McNiff (1998), arts-based research uses the art process to understand and examine the subjects experience as a part of data collection. Comparatively to more scientific approaches, the art process intensifies insight for the subject and data collection due to the high potential for unexpected responses that is encouraged through the art process, eliciting themes and symbols. As detailed by Zammit (2001), the integration of a case study with arts-based research enables a specific individual or subject to experience a heightened creative awareness of their unconscious internal process, enables a diagnosis to progress treatment, encourages acceptance of their "diagnosis and symptoms, increases expressiveness through emotion, insight, imagination," and is a transformative experience that enables the subject to understand their own emotional state and self (p. 34). Through the art process of Zammit's case study, the subject created many themes that helped the researcher identify the experience of the individual. In this research, using the ethnographic approach is due to the case study taking place within a school setting. As Spaniol (1998) explains, ethnographic research is done of the people and their cultures in a "naturalistic setting" (p. 30) so subjects can be observed and enable the researcher to better understand the subject's experiences. Due to the minimal literature exploring the benefits of art therapy with the Latino cultural influences on academic performance, this ethnographic approach will seek to bring light to these cultural influences. These steps will include "synthesizing the data collected through the art process, creating a structure or theoretical model that best fits the information collected, and lastly recontextualizing or developing the information into a new theory that includes the setting, situation, and population" (p. 31).

Method

Definition of Terms

Acculturation: Defined by Mikolajzcyk, Bredehorst, Khelaifat, Maier, and Maxwell (2007) as "the process whereby attitudes and/or behaviors of persons from one culture are modified as a result of contact with a different group" (p.2).

Ansiedad: Spanish word translating to "anxiety" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Attaque de nervios: A Spanish phrase described by the American Psychological Association (2000) in the Diagnostic Statistics Manual IV-TR to mean extreme anxiety and worry accompanied by somatic responses like shortness of breath often occurring as a result of family related stress (p. 899).

Arts-based: The use of art as a part of the research process that encourages unexpected responses from the subject, promoting insight into the subject's internal process (McNiff, 1998).

Case Study: This is a research process that looks into the development of a particular individual and is detail oriented. (Zammit, 2001)

Depresión: Spanish word translating to "depression" (American Psychiatric Association, 2000).

Ethnography: A research approach that observes people and their cultures in a "naturalistic setting" to better understand the lived experience of that culture (Spaniol, 1998, p. 30).

Externalizing Behaviors: Typically these are disruptive, deviant, acting-out behaviors resulting in aggressiveness and impulsivity. Overt cognitive processes are often associated with these symptoms (Sanders, Merrell, Cobb, 1999).

Externalized Disorders: Disorders have a "lashing out" quality. Associated disorders include oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and drug abuse (Sanders et al., 1999).

Familismo: Spanish term describing the family unit and encompasses themes of respect and loyalty to those considered family which often includes biological family members, neighbors, friends and extended family (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Indio: A term used by the case study participant to describe his Aztec and Mayan Indian ancestors (p. 63).

Individualized Education Plan (IEP): An educational plan developed by the school system to aid student's academic performance. Students qualify for an IEP through emotional disturbance and/or a learning disability that hinder academic performance.

Internalizing Behaviors: These behaviors are self-directed and typically considered over controlled. Covert cognitive processes are often associated with the symptoms. (Sanders et al., 1999).

Internalizing Disorders: Disorders that generally result in emotional despair or social isolation. Thoughts are typically negative, particularly towards the self and are at risk for social withdrawal, poor self-esteem, and suicidal ideation. Associated disorders include mood disorder, depression, anxiety, and somatic issues (Sanders et al., 1999).

Hispanic vs. Latino: For this paper, the term Latino is used since Spanish-speakers in the United States prefer the term Latino since the term Hispanic was developed by the dominant culture (Barrera, Gonzalez & Jordan, 2013).

Machismo: Spanish term that incorporates the expectations of men to be dominant and strong while also fulfilling the role as financial provider (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Marianismo: Spanish term that incorporates the expectations of women to be nurturing and self-sacrificing for the family (Sue & Sue, 2008).

Design of Study

This case study is used to examine the influence of cultural factors on the academic performance and behaviors of a Latino high school student. Using art therapy, themes and symbols that presented within the art were used to inform treatment and cultural awareness.

Sampling. Subject was chosen based on externalizing and internalizing behaviors and his own desire to build cultural self-awareness, looking specifically at the influence of cultural factors on academic performance.

Gathering of data. Data collection occurred during sessions between therapist and client. After each session, a process note was recorded indicating conversation topic, cultural factor at play and what the client's experience and feelings were during session. Photographs of each piece of artwork were taken. Data was coded according to a system that detailed themes of conversation, latent content in artwork, symbols in artwork and the feelings and emotions surrounding these different areas relating to protective and risk factors. Sessions and data collection occurred during the Spring 2014 semester beginning in January and concluding in April.

Analysis of data. Content of the art and surrounding conversation were considered in addition to the art process. Formal elements of artwork were also considered when conceptualizing cultural factors present. The data was coded and assessed in a way to illuminate symbols and themes to answer the questions: 1) What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural risk factors? 2) What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural protective factors? 3) How do these themes and symbols inform treatment? 4) How does art therapy benefit treatment and academic performance in a school-based setting? 5) How did these themes and symbols play out in the therapeutic relationship?

Results

Participant

Treatment. Jose (a pseudonym) is an 18-year-old male who has attended therapeutic school since the age of 16. Through his Individualized Education Plan (IEP), Jose receives weekly therapy qualified by poor academic performance and emotional disturbance. Therapy goals include building self-awareness in hopes of reducing externalizing and internalizing behaviors and to build rapport within the therapeutic space to enhance intra and interpersonal skills. Fostering self-awareness not only includes emotion recognition but the identification of cultural influence in daily life. Overall, these goals build towards identity development and effective feeling management to better enhance Jose's daily wellbeing and school performance. Therefore, art therapy was informally used as an assessment to identify themes and symbols in the life of this adolescent as well as an intervention to explore and process the cultural factors as they naturally presented in treatment. Additionally, art therapy was used at this point in treatment to begin bringing Jose's cultural identity into an integrated and understood self to help reduce the presentation of internalizing and externalizing behaviors that affect his quality of life. This research thus aims to identify themes and symbols found in the artwork of a student experiencing assimilation and bicultural difficulties and how the resulting information may help to inform psychotherapeutic treatment and the possible effects on academic performance.

It is through individual therapy that this research has been completed. It should be noted that the art therapist conducting the research is Caucasian and at the time research began treatment had been occurring for approximately five months with a well-established therapeutic rapport. Session is conducted in English. Jose and the art therapist engage through humor and conversation as it accompanies the art making process. Jose is sometimes inquisitive of the

therapist's interest in the topic, resulting in conversation about what she already knows about the Latino culture. Jose seemed comforted by the researcher's ability to speak Spanish and knowledge about cultural food, particularly since his mother is only Spanish speaking. Jose engages with jokes and funny sayings throughout session, continuously entertaining the therapist. The therapist and Jose often share moments of laughter that have greatly strengthened the joining phase of therapy and enabled Jose to feel safer within the therapeutic environment.

Treatment was not altered for the sake of the research. Major themes observed include contextual and developmental factors, familial expectations, gender, familial values, religion, language, socioeconomic influences and peer influence. In addition to these themes, other themes that surfaced in the research process include family narratives, humor, spirituality, and naming of objects and people. Specific formal elements of art and themes noted include line quality, inclusion of ground lines, and developmental drawing ability for chronological age, animal symbolism, chaotic composition, and color.

Description. Jose is a very personable young man with strengths that include humor, intelligence, and strong relationships with friends and staff within the school setting. He currently lives with his mother, 13-year-old brother, and 12-year-old sister. He has an older brother, 25, who no longer lives in the home and discussion regarding his father is minimal. Jose has verbally identified that he considers himself Hispanic, describing that his family of origin includes Mexican, Indian, and Spanish family members in order of predominant importance. When speaking about family, the relationships are generally described as strong and supportive. When describing his life, Jose has indicated that his family has "had it tough," but that they are also "very strong" and "hard to kill" with a tendency to "fix things."

In session, Jose will often maneuver conversation to touch upon many topics, carefully striving to avoid going deeper into the material at hand. At times, he can be difficult to follow with how quickly he speaks, employing humorous interjections and existential or philosophical questions. Often, he will lead the conversation by asking questions that further discussion. For instance, after verbalizing his train of thought, telling a story, or describing his family he will follow with "like why?" in order to answer his own questions so that the conversation can be continued. Due to the large amount of verbal content in session, the artwork is greatly contextualized by the conversation within the presentation of data. Jose demonstrates a great interest in the research, often checking the art therapist's session notes to make sure the information was correct and represented in full.

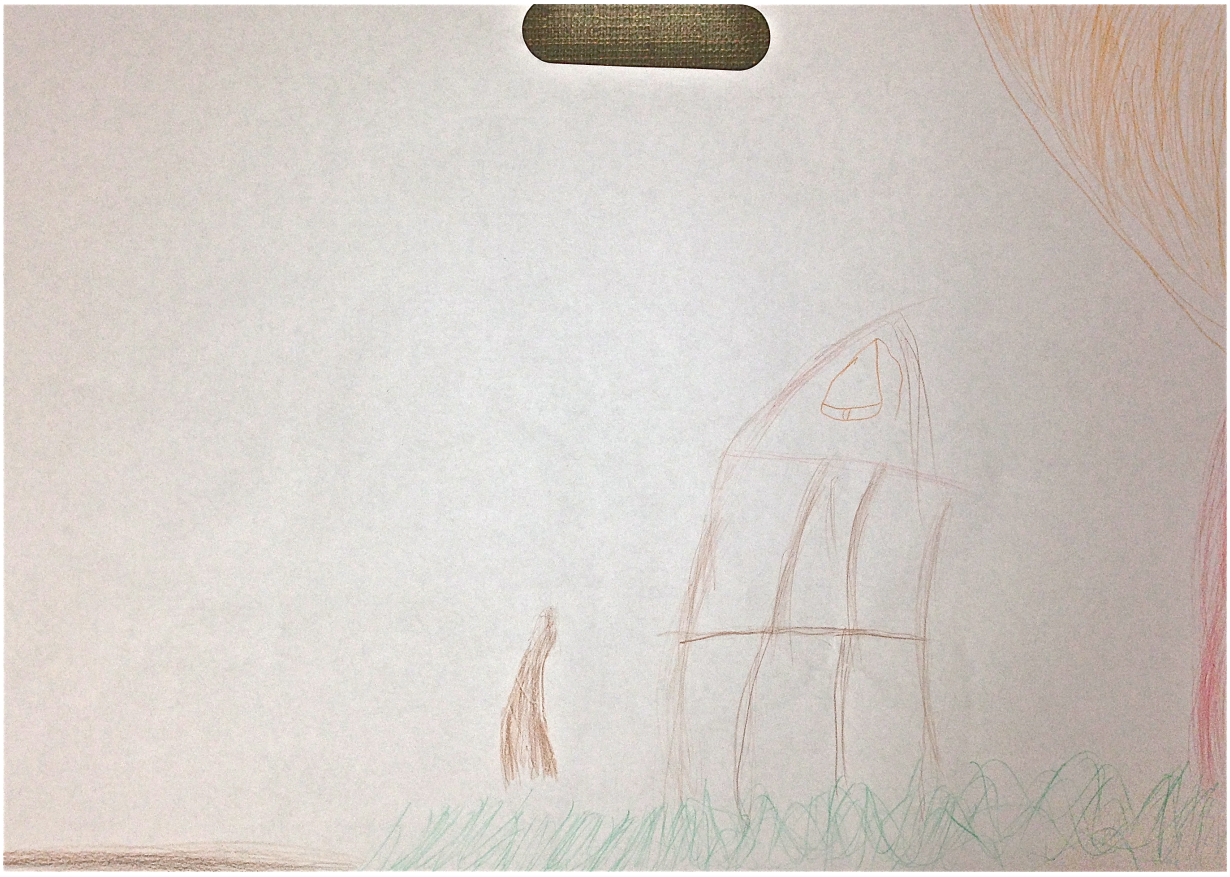
Presenting problem. Jose's presenting problems manifest in the form of internalizing behaviors, which include difficulty focusing in class, hallucinations ("ghosts"), isolative tendencies and great difficulty identifying emotions. In the past, he has demonstrated some externalizing behaviors including physical aggression and fighting, which have not been observed by staff within approximately the past year. School related presenting problems include high rates of absenteeism, difficulty focusing in class, and low motivation for schoolwork often resulting in the avoidance of the classroom through AWOL (absent without official leave) tendencies.

Jose has a history of trauma that includes being bullied and beaten up around the age of twelve that threatened his physical and integrity as well as growing up in a home with domestic violence. Often themes of him being a protector and victim at the same time arise both in conversation and in the artwork. He has difficulty sleeping, averaging according to him approximately three hours each night. As he states, he does not acknowledge the existence of his

own emotions or feelings because “they remind [him] of the past.” Jose is unsure of what type of career he would like to have and demonstrates difficulty with future-oriented thought. Due to his presentation, it is like that Jose is demonstrating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder with some psychotic features in relation to his childhood experiences and internalizing behaviors.

Presentation of Data

Session 1: Family narratives.



Directive. *Self-directed work depicting imagery of family narratives and family origin.*

Jose came into session citing that his mother recently reminded him of old family narratives as well as discussed new stories related to his culture of origin. Observing the excitement Jose demonstrated, it became important to meet the client's needs and allow for a space to explore and acknowledge these stories and their symbolism.

Presentation. Jose presented with great eagerness to demonstrate to the art therapist important family stories. The art process was accompanied by and deepened by the presence of verbal description.

Response.

Process. Jose was gregarious and led the conversation at his own quick pace, communicating enthusiasm to be able to share these stories and family history. For instance, he would make a statement that inspires curiosity in the listener, however instead of waiting for the therapist to engage him in conversation Jose would ask, "like why?" so that he could ensure the divulgence of pertinent and important information.

Quality. The quality of this particular work is succinct with most of Jose's other works. The lines are drawn quickly with minimal emphasis on detail, yet enough information is given to convey his points. This line quality is indicative of Jose's fine motor skills, where he states that he has nerve damage from an incident that makes it difficult to write in class and draw. Here, the majority of Jose's energy was focused on verbal conversation and accompanied by the artwork.

Content. Within this drawing Jose represents the town within which his maternal family is from and symbolically represented two stories that he has both experienced and heard growing up. Firstly and at the far right, Jose has drawn a large sun in the upper right hand corner with a red component underneath it. This red piece represents the outside wall of the home Jose's grandparent's and mother grew up in while still living in Mexico. The first story representation revolves around an unnamed family conflict encapsulated in the left half of the drawing. Here, the brown area represents the "bloody land" where no plants can grow as the result of a murder within a family from the town. At the center of the composition stands the church with a bell, centrally located in the town as well. In another story and drawn in between the "bloody land" and the church stands a tall brown figure that represents the town's ghost named the "White Lady."

Conversation. As Jose drew, he explained that most of the family stories are based on themes of regret and death that take place in the small pueblo in Mexico where his maternal family is from. This particular pueblo was once inhabited by a mixture of Mexican and Indian individuals but was overtaken by a Spanish landowner who made all of the pueblo's inhabitants servants. Jose described that by the time his grandfather was in his early teens, the Spanish landowner fled the pueblo and Jose's family moved into the landowner's home which until recently remained his grandparent's home. The red wall at the far right of the drawing represents this home.

In his first story, Jose describes how an ailing father needed to distribute his property to his three sons. As tradition, the land would be given to the eldest son, however, the middle son felt that he should receive the land and so he murdered his older brother in a field. This land became cursed and subsequently its fertility spoiled, represented in this drawing as the brown land, the "bloody land."

His second story details his family's presence and experiences in this small pueblo. In the pueblo exists a ghost who is called the "Lady in White" who is purely Indian and represented as brown figure in the center of the drawing. This woman killed a young man a long time ago and never properly buried the deceased. As a result, she disrupts the homes by rattling furniture in hopes of finding a townsperson who can help her find the body and bury it. Jose recounts that when he was two years old he visited this pueblo with his mother and can remember seeing the White Lady and wanting to befriend her. Jose indicated that he met the White Lady who has very dark skin on this visit and vividly remembers her presence. However because she is a ghost he verbalized that he has difficulty drawing her, which is why he represented her in such an ambiguous way.

Clinical conclusion for session 1. Jose's excitement in creating the artwork and quick pace at which he worked implies the importance of having a space to communicate his family narratives. Allowing this process to occur within an understanding and open environment seemed exceedingly important not only towards the therapeutic alliance but also as a part of Jose's treatment. In previous sessions it has seemed Jose responds positively to large sized paper that encourages him to include more information and often deepens his self-awareness. A great deal of Jose's work is comprised of these quick, agitated lines that often seem to correspond with his thought process. Conversation for this particular session seemed very important to Jose, allowing the communication of specific details.

This session illuminated family narratives and accompanying themes that illustrate Jose's family identity as rooted in many cultures. However, also to be noted is the incorporation of his family's experiences in this town and the implication these narratives have on his formed identity. Jose more specifically noted that themes of regret and death dominate the stories passed down in his family and have become normalized amongst the children as a part of life. It is possible that the presence and intertwining of these narratives through verbal description and visual depiction shows the internalization of culture. It is interesting to note how Jose has internalized these important narratives as his family's identity and a part of his own identity despite no longer being within that country.

Also present in these narratives is spirituality and ghost stories, as well as firsthand experiences, which may overlap with or contribute to Jose's hallucinations. This may be important to consider particularly given the central placement of both a symbolic representation of spirituality (the White Lady) and a symbolic representation of the church. It is possible that spirituality and religion tie this family together and contribute to identity. For Jose, it is probable

that as a part of a generation living in the United States with less exposure to the spirituality associated with his maternal grandmother as well as the primary Catholic traditions as experienced in Mexico, the role and messages of religion may be confusing and potentially contributing to the fear in his hallucinations that often prevent him from attending school. It is possible that he understands the therapeutic space is safe, as it has been well established, prompting Jose to process and explore how he feels as a part of his culture and how his culture contributes to his identity. In addition to this, Jose may feel this as an opportunity to educate the dominant culture seeing as though the art therapist is white and comes from a place of curiosity.

Themes related to risk factors: death, family expectation/tradition, family narrative, religion, and spirituality.

Art symbols/themes: abstract figure, agitated line quality, ground line, and narrative representation.

Session 2: Family genogram.

Directive. *Depict the family members pertinent to the session discussion*.

Jose began session by describing a conversation he recently had with his mother about his family. As he described many of his family members, it became difficult for both Jose and the art therapist to keep track of individuals being spoken about. The art was used to provide Jose with containment and a visual representation to clarify discussion.

Presentation. The process of describing individual family members induced some anxiety for Jose as it became evident he was beginning to flood with information. His affect began to change from being composed to agitated, visible through less eye contact and heightened hand movements as he was confusing the descriptions of different family members. Once the art was used, Jose returned to a composed and humorous presentation with less anxiety

and agitation.

Response.

Process. Jose was given white paper, drawing materials and different sized pom-poms to help visually represent his family, encouraging the clarification of family members, nicknames, roles, and family dynamics. Jose initiated by pulling the largest pom-poms to represent his grandparents, followed by medium-sized pom-pom is the second generation inclusive of his aunts, uncles and mother. Lastly, the third, fourth, and fifth generations—or "children" as he called them—are identified as the smallest pom-poms and were paid the least amount of significance, evidenced through the least amount of conversation or stories pertaining to their collective experiences. After picking all of the pom-poms first, Jose glued down each one and verbally named the family members, which he mostly referred to by their animal nickname. Some animal nicknames, although given in Spanish, included "tan," "turkey," "bull," "white haired," "teacher," "chicken," and "rat." Characteristics of each individual were described as he glued one generation at a time. As Jose named each person and described them, the researcher made notes on a separate piece of paper. Jose double-checked her notes approximately three times to make sure the names were correct. No spouses were included.

Quality. Jose seemed to respond in an organized manner to the three dimensional representation of his family. The quality of his work shows this as each family member of the second generation represents only the biological family member and their children.

Content. Within this session, particular topics verbally discussed included generational responsibilities, marriage, immigration, food and reasoning behind nicknames. Jose used the different sizes of pom-poms ranging from small, medium, large and extra-large to convey generational differences and characteristics of individuals. The largest pom-poms are given to

Jose's grandmother (pink), grandfather (beige) and a masculine uncle (orange). The second generation including his mother (light blue), aunts and uncles is generally represented with large pom-poms. Jose's immediate family is located on the far left hand side of the genogram with no individuation of self from his three siblings, all of which are represented with medium-sized pom-poms. The remaining cousins, nieces, and nephews are represented with small pom-poms. Jose did not denote color importance to the specific individuals, however verbally identified the nicknames of each of his aunts and uncles.

Conversation. As Jose described his family members, he discussed the immigration process for those who currently live in the United States. He detailed that he realized in this conversation that his family is "hard to kill," identifying many of the experiences they have endured both in their place of origin and in the United States. In this particular session he began to identify some of the ramifications for his generation and younger generations of families that immigrate. For his maternal family in particular this included sharing legal papers between family members and taking a range of jobs depending on language capabilities. For instance, Jose's mother was given a pig at her wedding in Mexico and chose to sell it in order to afford immigrating to the United States. Jose identified that although people choose to immigrate, it does not mean they are any less tied to their culture of origin, however also noted the changes in responsibilities for the children and younger generations. Jose recognized that translating for parents was more often than not the responsibility of the eldest child. For Jose, he states having an easier time speaking English than Spanish describing that he can read and listen to Spanish more easily than he can speak it. Language, Jose feels, is the key to greater success when immigrating, and feels that all immigrants should speak English so they can better themselves.

As his family has learned through finding jobs, Jose says that the aunts and uncles that are more financially stable speak English.

Clinical conclusion for session 2. The use of language to process has been strongest within metaphor during treatment. It seems that the use of animals to name his aunts and uncles may not only be safer, but also communicates certain characteristics without verbal identification. Animal names are given by relatives based on identifying characteristics like appearance, although it seems only the older generations are named and referred to by these animal names. For instance, his mother is referred to as a rat because she "can't be killed" while his uncle (the large orange pom-pom) is a bull because of his masculine traits. This also holds true for the individuals not referred to by animal nicknames, potentially communicating their wisdom or importance ("Cano" or "grey-haired man" and "La Maestra" or "teacher). It is possible that these nicknames hold power representing accomplishment, potentially represented in the differentiation of animal nicknames from human-characteristic nicknames. Furthermore, it may represent the intent behind immigration and seeking more desirable jobs. For instance, "La Maestra" is an aunt that is a teacher and "Cano" is a pastor. Comparatively, his mother is referred to as a rat and currently holds no job but collects disability and speaks only Spanish. The possible contrast in the type of nickname given to these individuals may demonstrate Jose's expectations rooted in family tradition, where those who find respected employment receive more human nicknames that continue to communicate particular characteristics, like wisdom.

Another clinical implication arises from only including and speaking about his maternal family in this session as well as in most all sessions. Although he considers his family small compared to "traditional Mexican families" there remains no talk regarding his father's family that would theoretically expand the family. It is interesting to note the role naming or

nicknaming plays for Jose, seeing as though in many sessions he will "name something [he] finds scary" so that "it isn't scary anymore." As Jose often states, "[he] does not have emotions" because "they remind [him] of the past," possibly directly relating to the need to name people or scary things in order to create distance. With this in mind, it is even more interesting to note the lack of discussion revolving around his father and that no nickname exists, despite the role nicknames play in distancing himself from fearful individuals, possibly communicating the lack of internalized father figure and resulting in confused cultural identity or complex trauma.

Themes related to risk factors: cultural standards, family expectations, gender, language, marriage, naming, religion, race and socioeconomic status.

***Art symbols/themes*:** naming, organization, and structure.

Session 3: Sleeping patterns.

Directive. *Using collage, Jose was asked to depict what his sleeping experience has been like recently.*

At the beginning of session, it was reflected to Jose that he had been frequently absent, including three consecutive days the week prior. When asked what was occurring, he identified that he had been having difficulty sleeping.

Presentation. Jose was inquisitive and curious.

Response.

Process. Jose began by thumbing through the images presented in the collage box, which include a large range of places, activities, objects, words, and interactions. Images included in

the collage box of people include diverse images speaking to different races, gender, and age. It became apparent that the projection process easily took place with the collage images, where Jose identified images pertaining to sleep, activities he enjoys, and animals. His process was calculated, stating he was looking for images that remind him of sleep.

Quality. Images chosen are glued down to a blue piece of construction paper, chosen for its color that reminds him of sleep. The images are not equally distributed throughout the page but separate the page into quadrants. Organizationally, the larger collage images are represented on the bottom of the paper. The left hand size of the paper contains "strange activities" that he tends to engage in at night, while the more direct images that remind him of sleep are on the right.

Content. The collage images Jose chose represent his associations with nighttime and sleeping. Directly representative of this is the inclusion of two moons in the upper right hand corner. Below, he incorporated an image of an adolescent African American boy hugging a cat. The last two images arranged on the left hand side of the paper are "strange activities" he can only engage in at night. They include a couple paddle-boarding and an image of a young boy on a beach watching people fish, presumably his family.

Conversation. Jose began session asking about what "normal" sleep patterns are like, stating he averages about three hours of sleep per night. He began that the moons reminded him most literally of sleep because the moon appears at night. At nighttime, he finds himself spending time with his pets, particularly his dog. When asked what factors prevent him from engaging in the "strange activities" otherwise, Jose described that he fulfills his responsibilities when he comes home from school that prevent him from having his own free time. He often will go to the market and buy a soda for himself as well as food for the home. Jose joked that because

of the fishing picture he would take to fishing at night, traveling to "some pond to fish and become like [the people in the picture]." Lastly, he says that he will often go and play with his dogs at night and lay on the ground with them and look at the moon. This activity is encapsulated in the image of the boy holding a cat juxtaposed to the pair of moons. To complete this piece, Jose titled it "sleep, or, not" describing the conundrum he encounters on whether to sleep or engage in activities he enjoys.

Clinical conclusion for session 3. Within the school environment, checking in on events that occur outside of therapy can provide important and pertinent clinical information. Seeing as though this was not the first time sleeping has been brought up in session, the topic was discussed more thoroughly and with absenteeism in mind. It seems evident that the cultural implications at hand include fulfilling family expectations possibly due to sibling hierarchy. As previously stated, Jose is the oldest of three siblings still living in the home and feels that his responsibilities and expectations for himself hinder him from engaging in activities that are fun for him.

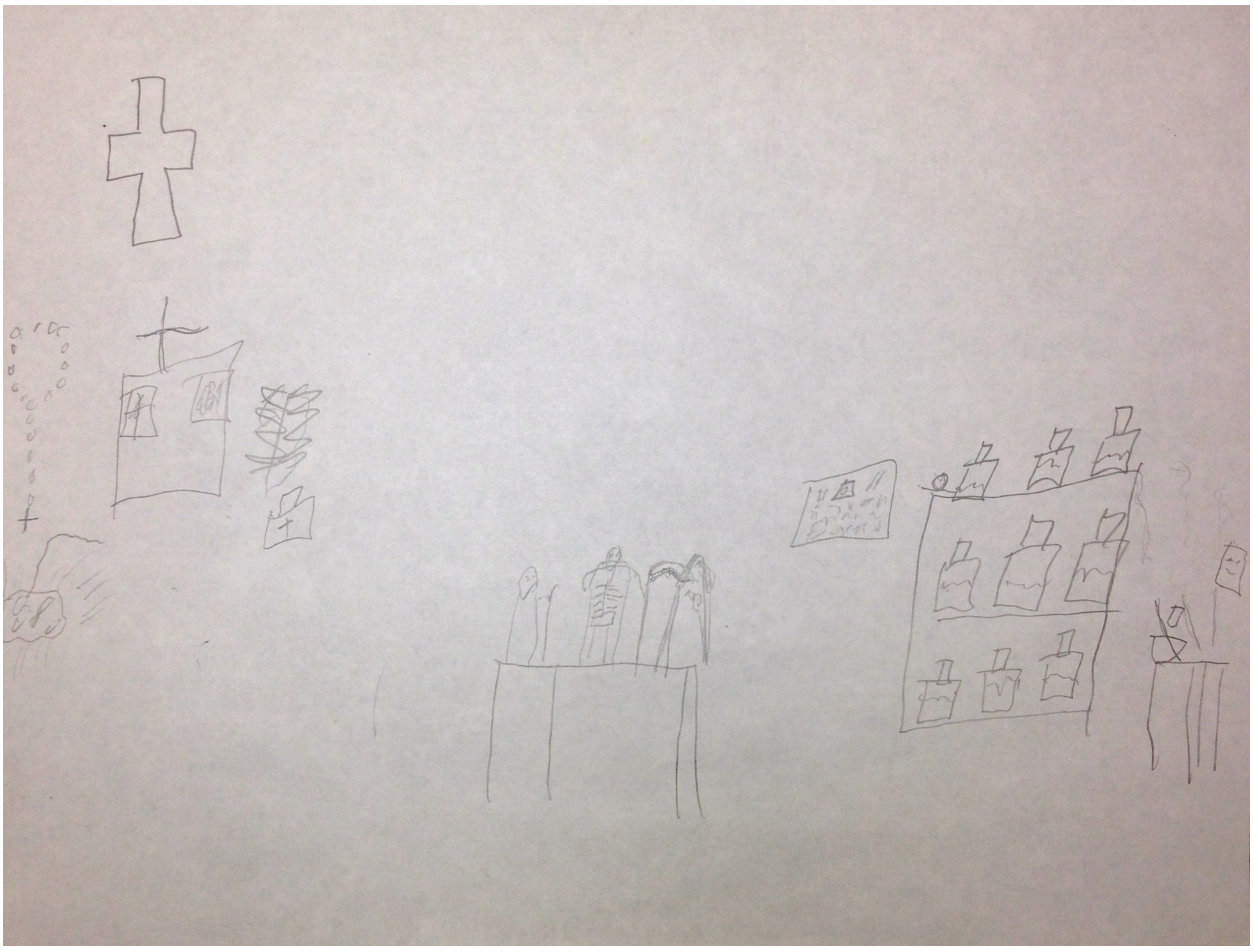
When looking at the collage imagery included in this directive, it is important to note the presence of companionship as well as the presence of a toddler and a kitten possibly communicating the presence of a younger self. Firstly, it is plausible that the companionship communicated through two moons, interaction of a human with a kitten, a toddler on a beach watching others, and two individuals paddle boarding may be speak to the unconscious need to provide for others or to know where the others are. When looked at from a cultural lens, particularly from the responsibilities Jose communicated in providing for his family when he returns home from school, it is possible that Jose's needs are being put aside until the family's needs are fulfilled, or, that his needs are to fulfill the needs of others. As the oldest male in the

home, this may be further compounding his presumed responsibilities, especially in using his own money to purchase food. However, it is apparent that Jose is attempting to meet his own needs through taking care of his family. It is also highly possible that his needs are being determined through cultural expectations of the family.

Themes*:* companionship, family expectations, generational roles, language, needs of others, and sleep difficulties/disturbances, socioeconomic status.

Art symbols/themes: animals, dyads/pairs, naming, organization and relationship.

Session 4: Religion.



Directive. *Create imagery describing your experience with religion*.

In looking at previous discussions with Jose, the presence of spirituality and religion within his mother's side of the family has dominated much conversation. Looking at session one (p. 47) and session two (p. 52) of the data, religion and spirituality were directly spoken about and represented in the artwork, indicating a component of Jose's identity.

Presentation. Client presented differently than in other sessions with at first less humor and less energy. Jose's less energetic and sullen affect may be attributed to what he had on his mind, which he began session by talking about death due to his ailing grandfather. As session

progressed, Jose's humor took precedent and he returned to his usual energetic and gregarious presentation.

Response.

Process. Throughout session Jose was engaged with the artwork and maintained focus and concentration towards adequately representing religion and spirituality as he encounters it. Throughout the drawing process, Jose verbally engaged with the art therapist. Jose began by thinking aloud, verbalizing that he felt his aunt has an equal representation of his family's spiritual and religious views throughout her home.

Quality. The line quality of this piece is shaky, however Jose was able to create identifiable shapes. Compositionally, the left side contains Catholic symbolisms while the right side includes spiritual symbols. Aside from the separation of religion from spirituality, these items have not been cohesively represented to create a narrative, but instead describe his religious and spiritual components. No ground line exists.

Content. The imagery indicates the divide and influences of the spiritual and religious components of Jose's identity. Beginning with the spiritual symbols on the right, Jose described the bottles of herbs drawn on shelves that he and his family tend to use medicinally. His aunt also uses an egg, seen at the top left of the shelf, to identify what the aura of the house is in order to cleanse the home of any spirits. In regards to the Catholic symbols on the left side, he represented the cross, a rosary, an altar, the thurible (metal ball of incense), a palm, and holy water. His process began with the centerpiece that is located at his aunt's house. She has displayed different saints (from left to right it includes the Good Shepherd, Death, and Jesus Christ). Interestingly and as pertaining to discussion, the representation of Death is very central to the general composition, heightening its importance.

Conversation. The religious influences stem from his grandparents where his grandmother is Indian ("Indio") and is seen as more spirituality related to Aztec and Mayan practices. His grandfather is Catholic, however Jose notes that he does not attend church regularly except for high holidays. In session Jose identified that he uses these two influences differently, where he seeks advice from the Catholic religion and healing from spiritual practices as well as a basis for respecting nature. Jose described that many of the spiritual practices that once were very common in the family were lost after much of the family immigrated, but some of the belief systems remain. For instance, Jose cites that the family's spiritual beliefs greatly respect animals for their feelings and spirit. Jose describes that he is not actively engaging in religious practices like attending church, but that he knows it is there for him when he needs it. Jose verbalized his thought process while creating this imagery, referring to how his aunt has arranged her home and equally represents both the spiritual and religious sides to the family and where the altarpiece is kept. Jose commented specifically on death, humorously wondering "what would happen if death died?"

Clinical conclusion for session 4. The composition of this piece is curious, possibly alluding to the differences of these two religions that make it "confusing" for Jose to integrate them. As he stated, if he could create an ideal religion, it would "borrow different parts of different religions" to better fit him. For Jose, it is possible that the location of death at the center of this composition is the most prominent aspect of life that unifies these two very different practices. One of the more notable differences Jose indicated between Catholicism and spirituality was the structure provided, particularly citing how there is no manuscript for spirituality like The Bible. However, Death also brings into play a transitional time in life,

possibly alluding to the gradual ending of Jose's time within the safety of a therapeutic school given he is 18 years old.

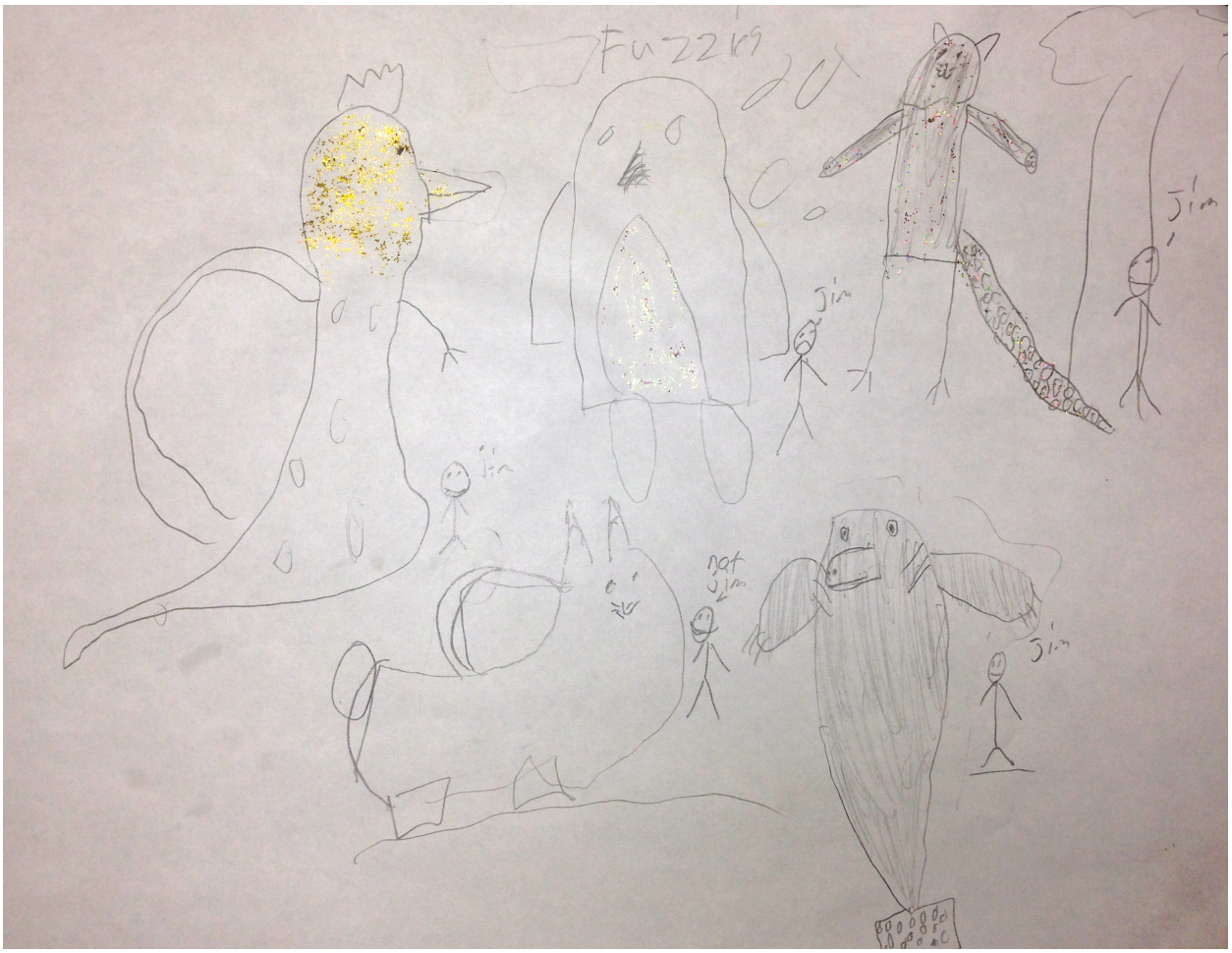
Another theme within religion that presented is death and very clearly drawn at the center of the page evoking its importance. In regards to death and discussing his grandfather's old age and fragility, Jose indicated that he would be ok with his grandfather's death because his grandfather has lived a long time and that death is a natural part of life. It is possible that the acceptance of death as a part of life's natural process comes from the respect of death found particularly in spirituality and the spirit as well as the promise of afterlife from Catholicism. Furthermore, it is possible that the continuous recognition of death in session, harking back to the discussion of death and regret within family narratives, speaks to the strength Jose's family has through their religious and spiritual identity. It is apparent that religion and spiritual practices are a large part of Jose's identity and this work may represent the subtle integration of these practices and belief systems into his identity and moral code. Often, Jose's description of religion sounded like it served the purpose of eliciting hope. Upon reflection to Jose, he responded that "[religion] is less necessary than basic survival."

Lastly, the change in Jose's affect from a sullen and quiet presentation then returning to his usual gregariousness may be reflected in the art process that provided him containment, expression, and awareness. It seemed that encouraging Jose to process surrounding feelings of death and death anxiety enabled him to identify once again the strengths he has through his belief system established by his family and culture. Furthermore, it is possible that visually representing and seeing anew how integrated his belief systems are offered him support in a moment of uncertainty, enabling awareness to be established and to ease any tension about life's transitions.

Themes: advice, death, generational hierarchy/importance, religion, religious practices, spirituality, spiritual practices and structure.

Art symbols/themes: firm lines, iconographic Catholic symbols, no ground line, organization, and separation.

Session 5: Animal-self representation.



Directive. *Create your own animal that represents you, which might be made of different types of animals (chimera).*

In multiple sessions including family member nicknames, animals have consistently come up. Jose had not yet identified his own animal-self.

Presentation. Jose presented in high spirits and positive energy, using a lot of humor in his creative process and enjoying creating many chimeras.

Response.

Process. At first, Jose rattled off a few different animal combinations that sounded "funny" to him. Throughout his work he both spoke and drew at a rapid pace, completing one

animal before moving on to the next animal. Upon completing the animal drawings, the figure "Jim" was drawn beside each chimera to contextualize the size of each animal, followed by adding some components communicating environments where the animals live. His last contribution to the work was adding a thin layer of glitter glue to the top three images to make them "pretty."

Quality. Jose continues to employ a slightly anxious line quality that is less agitated than previous drawings. His line quality is heavier than previous drawings and evidences better fine motor control. Although he contextualized most of the chimera's environments, Jose used a ground line on only two figures. Generally, the composition is chaotic. Jose included some detail using pencil, however also verbalized other details.

Content. Jose created these different chimeras using his imagination and humor with influence from his family's spirituality. From the top left corner moving clockwise, the animal figures drawn include a snake-bird-chicken, a flying penguin, jaguar-lizard, rabbit-bird, and a bear-fish. To contextualize the size of each chimera, Jose includes a human figure and some environmental information. Each of these animals eats humans as a sacrifice in exchange for their roles as gods. For instance, the bear-fish is the protector of water, the rabbit-bird is the protector of the forest, and the snake-bird-chicken is the protector of livestock. The jaguar-lizard is a "ninja cat" and was not given a specific role.

Conversation. When asked where he might have gotten these animal combinations, he indicated that the idea came from thinking of Aztec and Mayan gods. This was when he felt the need to include "Jim" next to each god to show the size of the gods. Jose detailed qualities of each chimera, particularly concentrating on the rabbit-bird and flying penguin. Due to the rabbit-bird's small mouth and "cuddly" looks, Jose identified the rabbit-bird is the only animal god that

is safe for humans because it cannot "fit its mouth around humans." For this reason, the figure named "not Jim" is drawn next to it and has been given a happy expression compared to the sad expressions of the other human figures. Jose jokingly asked the art therapist, "Do you know why there is no one named Jim in Mexico?...Like why?...Because they were all sacrificed!"

Jose described the penguin that can fly as the scariest of the gods because it "can see everything." Jose ultimately identified himself as the bear-fish, describing his own appearance to more bear-like due to his height and stature.

Clinical conclusion for session 5. It is apparent that Jose took this directive and used his creative and projective process to have fun. It is possible that creating this may have been somewhat abstract, possibly further due to compartmentalization of identities or self that may be occurring. When considering this with previous sessions, many questions surrounding spirituality/religion, family of origin, separation of parents, role as the oldest sibling in the home, and mental illness surfaced. These components seem to contribute to his identity but also do not seem to be integrated into one self. Therefore, it is plausible he has represented these different animal gods harking back to his spiritual background to help contextualize his different selves. It is possible that in relation to peers and his identity, Jose is aware of his own size as a tall and large male and is considering his own appearance when identifying himself as the bear-fish.

Jose named the fearful penguin "Fuzzies" as he typically does with scary images, figures, or objects. It is possible that the consistent need to name scary things while employing humor—"I shall call him Fuzzies"—is metaphoric for a scary introject that Jose has created; something that is not discernable or understandable, particularly with a traumatic childhood. It is possible that at an early age with a lack of language or ability to communicate, Jose's internalization process has resulted in the employment of humor to distance himself from the scary object. By

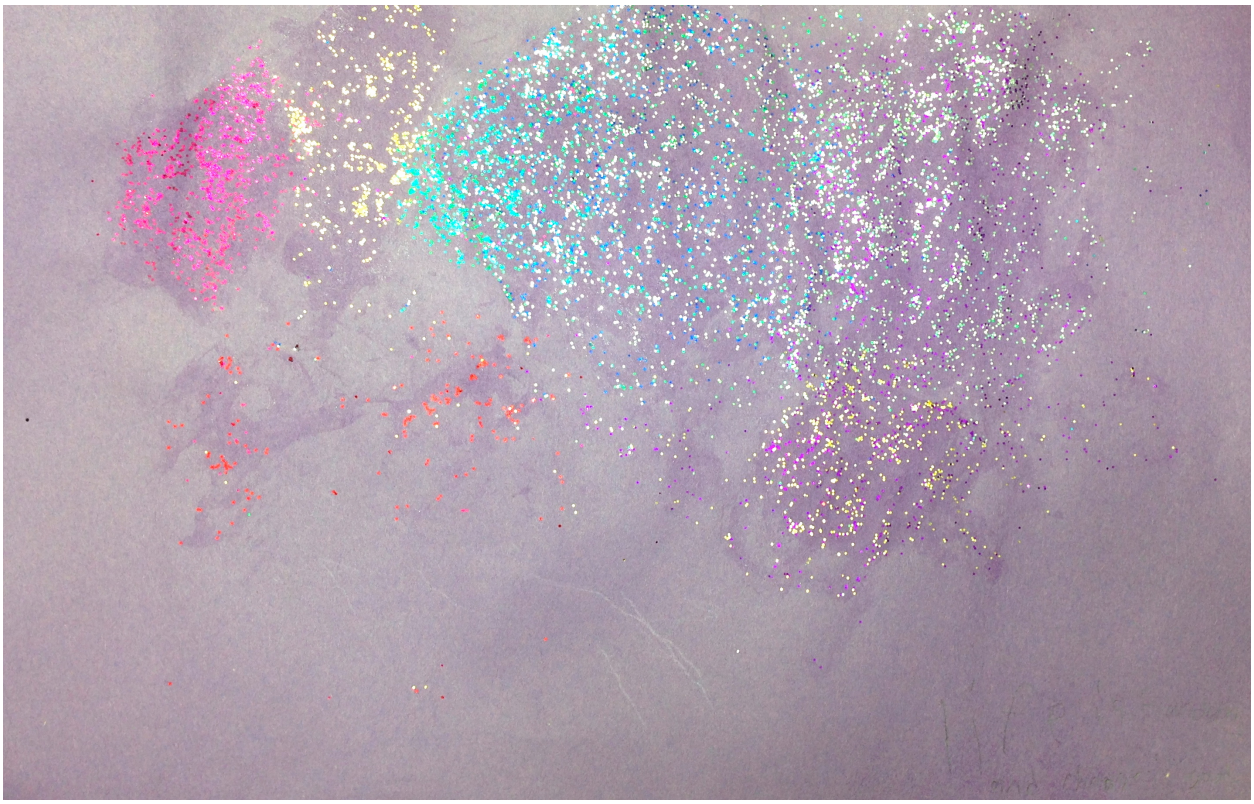
naming the scary chimera, Jose has in a way exerted control and ownership over the animal that is otherwise dangerous to humans.

It is possible that the scary introjects that seem to consistently present in Jose's artwork may be shown in this art work when focusing on the narrative created between the penguin, bear-fish and rabbit-bird which are central to the composition. As previously indicated, Jose identified most with the bear-fish who is the protector of the water within which he lives. It can be inferred that the rabbit-bird may serve as a protector of the sky for the bear-fish against the penguin that can fly. This may be significant due to the identifying of the penguin as something scary and threatening, resulting in naming it something funny, "Fuzzies."

Themes: appearance, companionship, compartmentalization, death/sacrifice, naming/nicknaming, pretty, and protector/victim identity.

Art symbols/themes: animals, companionship, comparison, heavier line quality, and protector/victim.

Session 6: Experience at School.



Directive*: Use the art to create a piece that reflects your school experience.*

This directive was presented at a time during the academic semester where each student's academic, behavioral, and mental wellness are evaluated for progress notes. This directive thus served to bring awareness to Jose's school experiences both in the present and past, as well as to identify any current struggles.

Response.

Process. Jose was initially presented with markers and colored pencils, however requested that he use "the gayest materials possible." He then chose to use loose glitter to define his school experiences, first applying glue to a large piece of purple construction paper, also referred to as "gay," and then used a paintbrush to mix the glue and glitter and to spread it around the page. This process was applied for each cluster of glitter. Jose titled the work "Life is

random but change is good," identifying that he has had many disruptions in life that have encouraged him to not make fixed plans because they prevent him from being able to adapt and survive. Conversation diverged from the topic of academics spanning into culture, the creation of metaphor with the art materials, nature, the role of language in his life, interracial couples, his neighborhood, appearances, goal setting, and lastly his experience in school.

Quality. The quality of Jose's piece is reflected by his use and mastery of the materials. No identifiable imagery was used on a horizontal composition. Jose's abstract representation of his school experience is best contextualized when keeping the session conversation in mind and the numerous topics discussed while discussion relating to school was minimal.

Content. The content of the imagery was given the name "blagé" by Jose, aiming to describe the blob-like qualities to each cluster of glitter. Jose used six different colors. Much of the content is metaphorically and symbolically represented in the artwork was verbally recognized.

Conversation. Conversation with Jose was complicated and convoluted touching upon many subjects. As Jose began to use the materials, he described that things were feeling "very bright lately." Clarifying the term bright, Jose stated, "things have been very good and happy lately" and that he "is waiting for the next earthquake" because "nothing bad has happened recently." Upon bringing this up, Jose compared a teal glitter to blue and green glitter attempting to figure out if teal is more blue or green. He identified that the teal looked more green next to blue and more blue next to green. He then compared this metaphor of appearance to himself. Depending on the environment in which he is being compared, he indicated that when around other races he sounds more Mexican except for when he is around Mexican individuals because he then sounds American.

Continuing with language, Jose identified that often times his mother feels misunderstood due to not being able to speak English. For Jose, however, living in a volatile neighborhood—described by him as having lots of crime and gang violence—being able to speak English and Spanish has afforded him alliances. He directly stated that he is "bored of his family and how [they] all look the same" yet they are "all strong." In recounting his alliances he has created in his home-neighborhood, Jose was asked if it felt like safety came in numbers, to which he described being needed in his neighborhood but not at school. Jose recounted seeing "lots of strange things happen and [we] buddy up," also saying that he has "saved friends and they owe [him] his life." Jose made it clear the benefits of having diversity, particularly when creating alliances. He stated that one can "never underestimate someone for their appearance because then you can have a mixed group," particularly naming strengths that come from being bilingual, looking different than your peers and how you dress. Through this, he cites having friends of different races and therefore can date African American females. This led to conversation surrounding interracial relationships where Jose indicated he feels same-race relationships are "boring," further explaining that same-race relationships promotes weakness when thinking about how "evolution works."

Session concluded with bringing Jose back to discussing his school experience. Jose acknowledged that if he showed up more to school and did more work he would have better grades. Currently, he has many absences and recognizes that he does the bare minimum of work. He says he has no goals for after school, because when one "sticks to a plan, [you] can't adjust if you need to." In describing his piece, he likened the mixing of different glitter colors to the mixing of culture that happens at school, recognizing that diversity "makes the group stronger." Furthermore, he recognized that at school, people have different mindsets related to their

different life experiences. Ultimately, Jose was not concerned with his academic performance, but more concerned about peer relationships.

Clinical conclusion for Session 6. Jose's quality of work may reflect his perception of school as an abstraction, indicating that school is not of high importance in Jose's daily life. As evident in the conversation topics, it would seem that Jose's concerns are centralized towards safety and survival due to the importance drawn to certain concepts and words like strength, the uncertainty in the recent "brightness," evolution, and the need to be flexible in order to adapt.

The materials evoked questions in Jose relating to his appearance and his own self-identity in comparison to his perception of cultural and racial identity. Seeing as though this was at the beginning of session, it is possible that this heightened the confusion surrounding the other topics discussed, but that the clearest topic is related to his role in creating in alliances with friends and saving their lives in a violent neighborhood. In direct relation to his school experience, Jose is currently in his senior year of high school. Although he is a senior, he will not be graduating due to credits. When considering safety, it is interesting to note that he is complimentary of his current high school and does not want to leave. Although his absenteeism is high, he otherwise goes unnoticed in terms of behaviors compared to other students. It seems as though despite Jose's desire to remain flexible to adapt towards whatever is presented to him, there is a desire to remain in school and avoid the transition out of high school.

Themes: absenteeism, anxiety, appearance, hypervigilance, language, metaphor, peer alliance, peer influence, race, safety, skin color, socioeconomic status, transition, uncertainty, and violence.

Art symbols/themes: abstraction, color mixing, lack of definition, and metaphorical process.

Session 7: Masculinity.

Directive. *Create a three-dimensional artwork representing your idea of masculinity*.

Jose began session with his normal affect, employing a lot of humor throughout session and consistently referring to concepts, art materials, and topics talked about as "pretty."

Response.

Process. Jose at first began with thinking aloud how he might conceptualize masculinity within the artwork. Provided with many materials, he chose to use pom-poms, drawn by their softness and "fuzzy" quality. After selecting a large green and a large beige pom-pom as well as medium and small-sized pom-poms, Jose dismantled a green pom-pom by cutting it with scissors

and glued it to the paper. Following this, he glued the medium and small-sized pom-poms, lastly attaching a cut apart beige pom-pom. Jose titled the piece "Gay Manly Dude."

Quality. This artwork contains a composition that was constructed within a structured approach, where Jose appeared to carefully glue each pom-pom down. With it being slightly three-dimensional, Jose was drawn to its kinesthetic quality—particularly its softness—and was continuously touching it.

Content. As Jose began the process, he identified that he chose the "manliest colors" offered to him avoiding the brighter pom-pom colors. Jose described that the completed artwork reminded him of a "hairy chest" due to the green deconstructed pom-pom glued across the majority of the paper. It is important to note the soft quality to this piece that Jose strived for compared to the other materials provided. In relation to the artwork and when asked what he would need to add to the work to make it "super manly," he stated he would add some sort of "explosion that [he] would stay and watch, not running away because he would have to "show his strength." Looking to explore the other side of the spectrum, Jose was asked how more effeminate qualities might be represented. From this, he selected one medium, purple pom-pom and surrounded it with six pink pom-poms to create a flower and placed it on top of the green "fuzz."

Conversation. Jose touched upon a range of topics related to masculinity. Topics include survival, death, illness and injury, family members, and family expectations. Characteristics of true men were described to be strength, having a mustache, an athletic appearance, able to engage in intensive physical labor, dark skin color and eluded to the avoidance of death as a manly quality. Jose began explain his upcoming spring break plans to go on a camping trip with his older brother, detailing it would be a "manly experience." In describing his brother, his "most

masculine quality is his mustache," and that his brother reminds him a lot of his grandfather who is quiet but will impart words of wisdom when he speaks. Despite that he looks most like his Aztec ancestors with a dark skin complexion, Jose's brother mostly believes in science and facts, leaving little room for his spiritual and Catholic roots. In relation to the art directive, Jose indicated that his fuzzy green artwork thus far reminded him of chest hair. He described it as "gay" while chuckling that it was the "manliest softness" but that to be more manly it needed to be "dirty" to reflect the physical labor expected of the men in the family as well as a "dark tan" from working outdoors. He moved into saying how generally his family threatens to disown gay family members, however within his home his mother has been very supportive of a cousin the family assumed was gay by offering him a home to stay in. Part of this conflict, Jose indicated, stems from this cousin's father—Jose's maternal uncle—who is a pastor in a Catholic church delineating the religious conflict of sexual orientation.

As conversation ensued, it appeared that masculinity presented on a spectrum for Jose, where he identified that "gay" exists on one side and "manly" on the other. When asked where he falls on the spectrum, Jose indicated "somewhere in the middle." At times, Jose questioned what really makes behaviors and actions considered homosexual in nature, and that he had once met a "super manly gay couple" that by his cultural standards appeared very masculine, denoted by their strong appearance, mustaches and how women seemed attracted to them as they walked by. Jose questioned whether anything could be considered manly, humorously describing how man could conquer anything. He wondered why flowers are so "girly" if men through the process of cutting a flower kill it, and that it could be construed as an "act of manliness." Furthermore he argued that the symbolic meaning of a heart to signify love also confused him,

since a man could cut out the heart of an individual and then give it to someone as a gesture of love.

Jose also defined how his family's ability to remain strong and avoid death prove the masculine qualities of his family. For Jose, his mother will often remind him of how he was born prematurely. However, despite his small size and fragile state, he affirmed the family's traditional expectations of men. He was a survivor that "wouldn't stop eating" and his mother tells him now he "clearly did not want to die." Jose also recounted stories told to him by his father about a chicken that Jose would fight as a young child. As the story goes, Jose learned at a young age to stay away from danger, citing that the chicken would peck him and chase him when he was a toddler. Despite what Jose identifies now as fear, he remembers he would swing at the chicken to protect himself. From these two stories and in connection with the physical pain, the idea of survival presents many times within the conversation of masculinity. "Death is for the weak," he said, describing his grandfather's resilience in surprising his doctor's with his capabilities in old age and fragile state. When male family members have been injured or encountered illness and physical ailments, no discussion or admittance of pain is allowed. Instead, the men are expected to put these feelings aside and continue on. For instance, he described how an extended family member—a neighbor referred to as *tio* (uncle)—cut his hand open while cutting down a tree. Instead of pursuing medical treatment, he wrapped his hand in a towel and continued working. Ultimately, Jose stated, "survival comes before fun."

Clinical conclusion for session 7. Jose's concepts of masculinity seem to stem form two sources: religion and survival. As he describes, many of the men in his family seem to be valued for their strength, particularly noteworthy through his consistent identification of the strong men that can do intense physical labor and lift a lot of weight. This connection to strength also seems

rooted in survival, harking back to being a newborn and having a strong desire to live and conquer illness. When asked to decipher the conflict found in his family about masculinity versus effeminate qualities, Jose demonstrated insight into the different generations and exposure to new and different cultures. As his mother was the first of her siblings to immigrate to the United States, he felt that she might be less rooted in her family of origin's culture, with more openness to other practices. As a result, it is likely that this has influenced Jose's idea of masculinity to lie on a spectrum. This is possibly communicated through his artwork, where choosing "manly colors" is contradicted by the softness of the pom-poms that attract touch and closeness but most importantly vulnerability. Some of this spectrum might also be conceptualized due to his encountering of different cultural values in the school system and as a part of the first-born American generation. Where morals and concepts of family expectations for masculinity are most likely strongly reinforced in the family's place of origin, it seems that Jose's experiences are challenging this ideas as he internalizes new ideas. This may also be encapsulated in the title of this piece—"Gay Manly Dude—where contradiction is included in the juxtaposition of terminology reflecting the spectrum of masculinity that Jose had been grappling with all session. Furthermore, this is also encapsulated within the abstract representation of masculinity within his artwork.

Themes: appearance, death, effeminate qualities, masculinity, religion, strength, and weakness.

***Art symbols/themes*:** chaotic composition, colors, and softness.

Analysis of Data

*1. **What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural risk factors?***

Prominent risk factors that stand out for Jose include language, parent and family expectations, peers, socioeconomic status and a lack of parental involvement with school. Beginning with language within the therapeutic setting, conversation dominates sessions and can be a performative piece with how he chooses to lead the conversation and gain control. In daily interactions, Jose indicates that language can highlight both differences and similarities between him and others he encounters in his accent. It can be imagined that this can serve as an isolative factor when he describes that when interacting with Caucasian students and neighbors that both his accent and appearance differentiate him. However, this process is also described with his interactions with Spanish-speakers, feeling that his accent also separates him from his culture while also stating that his skin color distinguishes him from family members who tend to be darker as discussed in the session pertaining to masculinity (p. 74). In his imagery, particularly from his artwork relating to sleep (p. 58), the desire for companionship and contact may come up against his idea of appearance which includes skin color, where the collage images chosen communicate companionship and closeness however the races represented do not match his own despite being presented with racially diverse images. The interaction between the figures in the collage images as well as any of the other images and drawn figures is limited, bringing into question the influence Jose's language capability plays with social isolation and poor self-esteem. Some of this "worthiness" of interaction may also be projected in the chimera work (p.64), where humans are used as sacrifices for the animal gods establishing a potential power dynamic where humans hold less value. It is conceivable that the lack of imagery included that aligns with his own skin color and appearance may speak to the differences he feels when

verbally engaging with both similar and different races, possibly feeling different from each one and unsure of where he fits.

Continuing with his encounters with peers and feeling different due to accent and skin color, Jose is also receiving treatment and earning his education in a therapeutic school where the presenting problems of other students influence other peers. Primary concerns include distraction and lack of motivation in other students to complete school related tasks and posing negative influences on other students. For Jose in particular, the academic disengagement of other students encourages his AWOLing habits and disinterest in academics. Other students also share some of the basic survival needs Jose describes that can lead to academic disengagement, which is also encapsulated within socioeconomic status. Socioeconomic status was briefly brought up within the violent and gang-affiliated neighborhood Jose lives within, but did not seem to overtly induce family-related stress due to financial stability or instability. Although Jose cited using his own money to at times buy food for his family, it did not seem to be a cause for stress but rather enjoyment. However, this did infiltrate and effect Jose's sleeping patterns as he had little time to engage in his own "strange activities" as discussed in session three (p. 58). As a result, Jose indicated it was more difficult for him to attend school due to disrupted sleep. Generally, the topic of school did not make it into session unless directly addressed, for instance in the final session. As visible, Jose's work is abstracted and conversation covered multiple other topics leading away form school. In relation to family expectations and responsibilities, survival through alliances, and navigating adolescent development, academic performance is not a high priority for Jose. The works ambiguity and the lack of school as the primary conversation topic during session six (p. 70) indicates the possibility of a negative covert thought process with low self-esteem related to capability and high absenteeism.

Parental involvement in Jose's academic career is minimal despite Jose defining a relationship with his mother. Family expectations filter in and affect Jose in a few capacities including sibling order, gender, religious expectations and language. The risk of these cultural factors presents as family-related stress that seems to take away from his focus on school, possibly heightening the presence of his hallucinations through stress and anxiety about meeting other's needs. The importance of family to Jose is adequately represented in the content and conversation surrounding the genogram (p. 55), where he was visibly flustered prior to the inclusion of the art process that allowed him structure, containment, and a way to visibly represent those he was speaking about. The importance in the process of clearly representing the family of each member is shown through pom-pom size differentiating the importance to each generation. The structure and organization given to representing the family supersedes all other compositions created, heightening the importance to the content and subsequently reaffirming the importance of the family unit and their expectations. It is also evident in his piece regarding sleeping patterns (p. 58) where he only has time for his own "strange activities" if he stays up late at night due to the responsibilities he must tend to once he comes home from school.

In many of the sessions, discussion regarding appearance surfaced many times and underlies a large component of identity that Jose seems to be grappling with as both an adolescent and through the assimilation and acculturation process. In the chimera directive, Jose most directly commented on his own appearance, relating himself to the bear-fish for its tall and broad qualities. Interestingly, in other conversations he noted the role skin color plays when particularly describing family members especially when commenting on his light skin tone when most of his other family members are darker, relating to the Indian origin. In particular, expectations for what men look like surfaced a few times, where a true masculine man is

delineated by a mustache, strength, the ability to work hard, be "dirty" due to labor, have chest hair and a darker skin complexion due to working outdoors and sun exposure. Expectations for actions also exist, primarily actions that demonstrate mental strength as well, where emotions and feelings are not acknowledged nor is love verbalized but shown through actions. The demonstration of love and feeling is intertwined in a few pieces. For instance, the imagery of the young boy holding a cat and showing affection and the other images of companionship present in the sleep imagery, as well as the idea of providing protection over certain domains within the chimera piece. This protection for others and self is present within the penguin metaphor, where the penguin attacks humans. However, Jose has named him "Fuzzies" in order to establish dominance, control and humorous power over the penguin in order to distance himself through a covert cognitive thought process.

Continuing with masculine constructs, Jose quite often integrated phrases using the words "gay" and "pretty." For instance, when creating imagery around school experience, Jose commented that he wanted to use the "gayest materials" and that the glitter "looks pretty" and that "[he] wants to be pretty." In contrast, the interjection and use of the words "gay" and "pretty" were used more sparingly when creating the work around masculinity, except for when describing a family member that was perceived as gay. The underlying message that seemed to be communicated was the tension arising between three spaces. Firstly, school may feel like a safer environment to explore sexuality due to many peers exploring their own sexuality in an environment where many cultures come together. Secondly and within the family, the expectations of masculine representation and *machismo* are much more defined through family stories and modeled by his uncles and grandfather. Lastly, the religious space, as Jose says, very clearly delineates masculine expectations reaffirming the family and religious values. This

conflict may have risen through the abstract imagery of both pieces relating to school and masculinity, where Jose was grappling with what the appropriate expression for each might be. Furthermore, the divulgence of only certain information since the expression of emotion and feeling is seen as "weak," but also reminiscent of past pain for Jose. Thus, the gender expectations that have been communicated to Jose and internalized seemed to have promoted internalizing behaviors through poor self-esteem and possibly creating emotional despair. This possible confusion from the conflicting spaces could also be seen as the demonstration of anxiety in the artwork due to lack of composition, organization, and identifiable content that keeps the viewer out of Jose's internal world and subsequently away from the feelings and emotions that may greatly conflict with his understanding of his male self.

One image that does demonstrate a physical connection is between the boy and cat representative of when Jose interacts with his dog. However, this interaction most often occurs at night when everyone else in the home is sleeping, making the interaction unseen. Furthermore, the interaction is not with another human. Moving deeper is the idea of touch that is represented in this imagery. Touch is also enticed within the viewer in the final session imagery (p. 73), where Jose included soft kinesthetic material that seeks touch from the viewer and communicates vulnerability. This contradicts other ideas Jose has communicated as far as masculine expectations, where vulnerability is a sign of weakness as expressed through feeling, emotion, and overt affection. This process may speak to the internalized and quieted needs Jose has due to the constructs around acceptable *machismo* behaviors most likely contributing to the lack of vocabulary or language needed to identify and adequately express these needs. As a result, internal turmoil and internalizing behaviors that encourage avoidance through AWOLing from class, social isolation, low self-esteem and covert cognitive processes occur.

2. What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural protective factors?

Some overlap exists between factors that have served as both protective and risk factors for Jose, particularly language and peer relationships. A primarily protective factor that presented includes religion. In both conversation and art content, religion is prominently represented throughout many sessions. As Jose described, the role religion and spirituality play in his daily life include seeking advice and healing practices respectively. In the artwork Jose has directly represented symbols that describe both his spiritual and religious beliefs as he has encountered them within his family, particularly through an aunt's home, which was the basis for this drawing (p. 61). Although he did not draw his own practices, his idea for creating this image was to consider where in his family he has encountered an equal balance of spiritual and religious icons and symbolism in order to adequately represent the importance of these beliefs for him. Compared to other more abstract pieces Jose has created where the abstraction communicates uncertainty and confusion, Jose's representation of religion and spirituality is integrated, possibly speaking to his clear understanding the roles these practices play in his life as a protective factor when seeking advice and healing. This could be represented in the drawing where the Good Shepherd, Death, and Jesus Christ are located at the center of the drawing, which while being drawn were accompanied by conversation about death and Jose's relation to death through his spirituality and religiosity, conveying the comfort and structure these beliefs provide. Ultimately, it can be perceived that these practices have enabled Jose to reduce some of his internalizing behaviors like isolation. Furthermore, having a seemingly integrated religious and spiritual identity, it seems that anxiety around death and the older generations, particularly grandparents, is much easier to externalize in healthy and appropriate ways that do not cause stress, thus not seemingly effecting academic performance and minimizing mental health implications.

Language serves as a protective factor through stability, connection, safety, control and ownership for Jose. For Jose, although language poses as a risk factor when considering the familial responsibilities for translating, language also serves two distinct purposes as a protective factor in terms of using language to nickname and distance as well as provide social mobility. Jose gains control and distance to emotionally loaded content by giving it a nickname. In the artwork this is particularly seen in the chimeras he created (p. 65), where the penguin is given the name "Fuzzies" instilling ownership and humor in order to distance the potential threat this animal poses. Ownership continues through the process of naming his artwork, clarifying his covert thought process as well as content. This naming practice most likely demonstrates some of his internalizing behaviors, where the act of seeking distance from triggering stimuli protects against anxiety.

Furthermore, language serves as a way for Jose to create safety, allowing him to create "alliances" and friendships in both the school setting and in his neighborhood. This brings in peers serve as a protective factor through the alliances he has made efforts to create, a process that has been possible due to language assimilation, providing him safety within his neighborhood and school. Although peers have also been a risk factor for poor academic performance in the school setting, his survival and mental stability have been increased due to friendships and is represented in the artwork through themes of companionship. The combination of language and peers has thus protected Jose against some isolative behaviors, which he has a history of, as well as a reduction in externalizing, aggressive behaviors within the school setting through the development of support systems.

3. How do these themes and symbols inform treatment?

When looking at Jose's artwork as a whole, the themes and symbols that present to inform treatment are represented within the formal elements of his work and communicate components of identity integration. When considering the themes and symbols that present with the risk and protective factors of this population, looking at them individually and as a whole greatly effected and informed treatment. Within treatment and within culture conversation, these topics surfaced organically and demonstrated the importance to both the culture and to Jose. It became further evident that examining these aspects on individual levels was difficult to do, as evident by the constant tangential conversation throughout session due to the intertwining of these factors. It was demonstrated that although the artwork helped Jose focus on fostering self-awareness through conversation and art, almost all of these cultural themes were touched upon each session. It is important to then wonder if examining these factors on an individual basis without allowing for conversation in how these factors relate to each other would encourage disintegration of identity at a time in adolescence where identity formation is crucial. This is particularly true when navigating multiple cultures and trying to assimilate. Understanding the compounding effect of these factors is thus important in understanding the larger clinical picture of this client. Therefore, it seems that there is a role of sublimation in the artwork, where as integration and reduction of internalizing and/or externalizing behaviors occurs, the artwork may take on a cohesive nature through organization and structure. Furthermore, it does seem evident that Jose often sought out structure and organization possibly to provide himself with containment for his rapid thought process, making sublimation a treatment goal specific to him.

The feedback received throughout treatment regarding art content also informed material choices. Large papers in the past have encouraged Jose to create more imagery incorporating

more information. At times, the material choices, particularly the size of paper and drawing material, also provided containment. Jose seemed to enjoy using the pom-poms due to their kinesthetic properties, being soft to the touch and soothing for him but also enticing for the art therapist to interact with him and the art as well. In almost each session, Jose was given access to all types of materials, including paint, glitter, glue, collage, various drawing utensils, and multiple sizes and colors of paper. However, his choices were often structured and containing, evident of top-down processing and a covert cognitive process that controlled for the expression of feeling and emotion in order to avoid "[thinking] of the past." The process and product may clearly communicate areas that lack integration into self as well as anxiety.

Stylistically, Jose demonstrates a fairly agitated line quality theme that when coupled with his process communicates a difficulty mastering drawing materials. However, in some artwork, for instance in his religious piece, his line quality is more deliberate, exact, and controlled. Jose's line quality also demonstrates a younger developmental age due to having only some mastery over the materials along with a lack of perspective or composition, possibly speaking to the stagnation in development due to traumatic experiences.

In regards to composition, Jose vacillates between organized and structured compositions with chaotic and abstracted compositions. It is likely that Jose's composition are indicative of the integration of the topics discussed during that session, possibly representing the clarity or lack of clarity Jose holds over these components of identity and areas of stress. For instance, when looking at the family narrative from session one (p. 48), the composition integrates multiple story lines with experience and family to create the most complex and integrated composition of any of his artworks. Similarly, the family genogram is highly structured, related directly to his

experience with his family and the transgenerational characteristics of spirituality and religion, individual stories, and family relationships.

In many sessions, Jose made reference to the role of color as well. In a "colorful culture," as he described, color as a mode of expression often conflicted with gender expectations. Jose enjoys color, however his use of color to enhance his drawings seldom occurred. In his final artwork representing masculinity, color was very conscious, where he actively chose the "manliest" colors to capture masculinity. Yet, his narrative piece is done with only color speaking to the "colorful culture."

Lastly, a common thread that presented throughout many sessions is not directly encompassed in cultural values or factors. Through family narrative, religion and general conversation death presented numerous times. Although Jose stated that death is present in many of the family narratives and that it is something that is understood within the family as a part of life, in the case of treatment it may symbolically refer to his current life stage transition as an 18 year old in the last year or so of high school. Consistent with family cultural values is the assumed responsibility of men when they come of age. However, within the metaphor of death, the imagery and narrative surrounding this theme may further heighten Jose's upcoming transition out of high school. Although comforted by religion and spirituality in his grandfather's old age, this figurative "death" may mark the end of childhood and the assumption of adult responsibility within the culture. It is possible that this life change creates great fear and anxiety, further contributing to Jose's internalizing behaviors of AWOLing, which in turn hinders his classroom productivity. Through high absenteeism, minimal work completion, and a lack of interest in academics, it is possible that this fear of leaving school stems from the graduating out

of a safe environment full of alliances, friends, understanding staff, and understanding therapeutic environments that have eased Jose's internal process.

4. How does art therapy effect treatment and academic performance in a school-based setting?

Throughout treatment, the art therapist would engage in conversation to gauge if at home discussion regarding presenting topics in treatment surfaced. Many times, Jose came to session with new stories and narratives regarding his family and cultural beliefs as well as discussing conversations and questions he had with his mother regarding topics stemming from therapy. It seemed that the active discussion occurring within school-based treatment encouraged parental involvement with school in addition to a heightened interest in Jose's mental and academic well being.

In addition to this, the ability for a client to have a space within school where they can express without fear of judgment proves beneficial. Schools are considered to be the main place of socialization for children, where attempting to assimilate into different groups and cultures can be extremely stressful. Therefore, having an opportunity to explore feelings and emotions surrounding this process in a reaffirming environment has seemingly reduced some of the triggering school-related material for Jose. Although the space proved to be beneficial for Jose, the role as a student counselor can be ethically difficult to navigate. Tying the interpersonal and intrapersonal dynamics back into school related counseling at times can prove challenging, however crucially important to the clinical case. This therefore serves as a reminder to the therapist to keep in mind the goals of treatment and the ethical implications of treatment within school-based treatment and the desires of the student client.

5. How did these themes and symbols play out in the therapeutic relationship?

The cross cultural interaction between client and art therapist seemed comfortable due to therapist's knowledge of the cultural systems and the intricacies and intertwining factors that can be encountered by the client. The therapeutic relationship benefitted from normalizing both adolescent development as well as the assimilation process. At times, Jose's curiosity about the art therapist's interest in the topic due to differing race and cultures surfaced, opening moments for self-disclosure by the therapist that strengthened the therapeutic relationship and safety of the therapeutic environment. It was important to remember that the curiosity and interest maintained by the therapist towards the client's experiences further developed the safety of the therapeutic environment, seemingly making it easier for Jose to share his experiences as evidenced by the tangential conversation and divulgence of individual and family experiences.

It also became evident the importance behind remaining mindful of the cultural systems at play, where the curiosity and judgment-free environment are often not encountered cross culturally, which in turn continuously strengthened the therapeutic relationship. Lastly, the art process provided a way in which Jose could safely and within his control impart information through visual representation, encouraging feelings of being heard and understood within the therapeutic space. This process also seemed to circumnavigate the defenses he often presented with, such as humor, rejecting the idea of having feelings or emotions, and leading the conversation.

Findings

In reviewing the roles of these cultural factors and their influence on internalizing and externalizing behavior, it became evident that when analyzing the factors some presented as both protective and risk factors. Upon looking closer at peer relationships and language, it seems that

these factors have a strong presence within both cultures possibly leading towards a stronger assimilation experience. For example, the development of bi-lingual language strengthened bonds between different cultured individuals. For Jose, his ability to befriend and establish support can be seen as a strength that has possibly stemmed from needing to find structure in his surroundings to promote safety. The largest risk factors for Jose seemed to be those that manifested in chaotic and abstracted compositions, where his family cultural values differ more greatly than the values he encounters within school and neighborhood enviornments. It also seems that the protective factors at play are factors that have helped assimilate him into the majority culture due to a common occurrence of these factors within his culture and the majority culture. To illuminate this further, the presence of the Catholic religion in Jose's family is a part of mainstream culture where he is aware that he can seek support or advice from the church when needed. However, religion does seem to contribute conflict within gender and sexuality due to the strong basis of his Mexican heritage within the Catholic religion. Therefore, it seems that the factors that are more difficult to separate that ordinarily provide great structure for individuals may exacerbate internalizing and externalizing behaviors and disorders when mainstream culture exposes the individual to other opinions and values. For Jose, this resulted in ambiguity in particular artworks and an increase in tangential conversation topics, possibly due to the lack of language or understanding surrounding these notions that contradict his family of origin.

A larger consideration for treatment revolves around adolescent life stage as well. It can be seen through conversation and the artwork that Jose's independence is being demonstrated which directly conflicts with cultural expectations of providing for the family unit until marriage as well as taking care of the elders. Although Jose demonstrates these behaviors through taking

care of family members and financially contributing to the family, it seems that his autonomy is being foreshortened and possibly clouding his ability to explore adolescence.

Conclusion

The process of adolescent exploration where opinions and beliefs are developed according to cultural standards seems to be highly effected by the assimilation into two different cultures. In working with this population, positive and negative influences are visible and speak to the internalizing and externalizing behaviors as well as identity development. However, it has become evident that although Jose has experienced childhood trauma, it is important to not pathologize internalizing and externalizing behaviors, particularly if some of the behaviors stemming from the risk factors may be encouraging defense mechanisms that increase survival. Often, themes of being a protector and victim at the same time arise both in conversation and in the artwork, specifically looking at his chimera work (p.66). When viewed alongside internalizing behaviors, the duality of this relationship may speak to his covert thought process and the direction of emotion inward in order to encapsulate these dual roles. At the same time, given his developmental age and stage of life, the exploration of these factors in treatment are imperative for identity development. In this same artwork, the possible splitting of self into five different chimera representations may delineate the lack of identity integration and understanding when sitting between many cultures. As he states, he does not acknowledge the existence of his own emotions or feelings because "they remind [him] of the past" and is unsure of what career is meant for him. It is possible that Jose is demonstrating Posttraumatic Stress Disorder with some psychotic features in relation to his childhood experiences and internalizing process.

As it has become evident, different ways in looking at the factors can influence our understanding of the client. Identifying the factors on an individual basis and analyzing them can show both the positive and negative attributes of their influence. However, when conceptualizing

these individual factors through an intertwining and integrative process, their influence on the client's identity formation can be more understood.

When working within the school based setting where all of these factors can be witnessed first hand, particularly when interacting with other individuals of varying cultures, race, socioeconomic status, presenting problems, mental health difficulties, and academic difficulties, it seemed that in this case study the client's defenses were working in his favor. Although therapists may see a need to address particular issues in treatment, in the school based setting one must remember that the intention is to heighten academic performance through addressing certain factors usually through short-term treatment. Bringing awareness to Jose's environment as he named it for himself seemed to allow him to appropriately externalize the emotions and feelings he worked so hard to ignore. However, as evident in the artwork, a sublimation and integration process began to incorporate his different identities that had been defined and sometimes separated by the morals he had internalized through assimilation and biculturalism. It is through this process that the impact of cultural factors can be seen to sometimes work with or against academic performance.

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Appendices

IRB Approval

Dear Ms. Carfagno,

Thank you for submitting your IRB application for your study titled *Latino Cultural Implications for Art Therapy: The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School*. All documents have been received and reviewed, and I am pleased to inform you that your study has been approved.

The effective date of your approval is **January 29, 2014 – January 28, 2015.** If you wish to continue your project beyond the effective period, you must submit a renewal application to the IRB prior to **December 1, 2014.** In addition, if there are any changes to your protocol, you are required to submit an addendum application.

For any further communication regarding your approved study, please reference your new protocol number: **LMU IRB 2014 SP 07.**

Best wishes for a successful research project.

Sincerely,

Julie Paterson

Julie Paterson I IRB Coordinator I Loyola Marymount University I 1 LMU Drive I U-Hall #1718 I Los Angeles, CA 90045 I (310) 258-5465 I jpaterso@lmu.edu

IRB Application Cover Sheet

Received_____

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Human Subjects Research
APPLICATION TO THE LMU INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)

Principal Investigator (P.I.): **Piera Carfagno**

Title of Project: **Latino Cultural Implications for Art Therapy: The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School**

P.I. Type: (check one) ☐ Faculty ☒ Graduate ☐ Undergraduate ☐ Other

Department: **Marital and Family Therapy**

Campus Address: **1 LMU Drive, Los Angeles, California 90045**

Telephone: **(310) 866-3205** E-mail: **Pdid597@gmail.com**

Faculty Sponsor (if applicable): Anthony Bodlovic

Submission: ☒ New ☐ Renewal ☐ Addendum ☐ Staff ☐ Other Previous IRB No.

For evaluation of your project, indicate involvement of any of the following:

- ☐ Audio recording of subjects
- ☐ Charges incurred by subjects
- ☐ Deception
- ☐ Elderly Subject (over 65)
- ☐ Establishment of a cell line
- ☐ Experimental devices
- ☐ Experimental drugs
- ☐ Fetal tissue
- ☐ Mentally disabled subjects
- ☒ Minor subjects (younger than 18)
- ☐ Non-English speaking subjects
- ☐ Non-patient volunteers
- ☒ Patients as subjects
- ☐ Placebos
- ☐ Psychology Subject Pool
- ☒ Questionnaires
- ☐ Sensitive Topics
- ☒ Subjects studied off campus
- ☐ Subjects to be paid
- ☐ Surgical pathology tissue

- ☐ Approved drugs for "Non-FDA" approved conditions
- ☐ Charges incurred by third party carriers
- ☐ Data banks, data archives, and/or medical records
- ☐ Filming, photographing, and/or video recording of subjects
- ☐ Pregnant women, human fetuses, and neonates
- ☐ Prisoners, parolees, or incarcerated subjects
- ☐ Subjects in Armed Services (Active Duty)

The principal investigator assures the Committee that all procedures performed under the project will be conducted by individuals legally and responsibly entitled to do so and that any deviation from the project (e.g., change in principal investigatorship, subject recruitment procedures, drug dosage, research methodology, etc.) will be submitted to the review committee for approval **prior** to its implementation.

What do you plan to do with the results? Please provide a brief summary statement below:

NOTE: Applications and any additional material requested by the IRB will not be processed unless **signed personally** by the principal investigator.

Date	Signature of Principal Investigator (Required)	Name (printed)
Date	Signature of Faculty Sponsor (Required)	Name (printed)
Date	Signature of Department Chair or Dean (Required)	Name (printed)

For ORSP Dept. Use Only

Date	IRB Approval (Signature)	Name (printed)

IRB Approval Number

Please deliver to: Julie Paterson, IRB Coordinator, University Hall, Suite 1718 or jpaterso@lmu.edu.

IRB Questionnaire

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

IRB Application Questionnaire

1. *RESEARCH BACKGROUND*

This research fulfills requirements for a graduate degree in Martial and Family Therapy.

The literature demonstrates a strong discussion regarding academic difficulties that Latino students demonstrate in high school. Problems include significant high school drop out rates and poor academic performance. The literature communicates an overlap with poor academic performance and mental health, identified as externalizing and internalizing behaviors that disrupt academic performance.

This case study thus aims to look at cultural implications for this population in a school based setting through the lens of art therapy since little art therapy literature exists. Therefore, this research aims to identify symbols and themes that can be found in the artwork of students experiencing these cultural difficulties and how the resulting information may help to inform psychotherapeutic treatment and increase the grades of student subject(s).

2. *SUBJECT RECRUITMENT*

Subjects will be selected by ethnicity from the current caseload of the researcher. Between 1 and 3 Latino subjects will be chosen between the ages of 14 and 18 from the high school that the researcher is currently interning at.

Subjects will be selected by ethnicity, age, and willingness to participate. If client chooses to participate it will be discussed that treatment will not be altered, merely artwork and process notes will be used for the research project. This study is both voluntary but may also heighten self-awareness.

Due to the age of potential subjects, parents will first be contacted to describe the nature of the study as well as to receive consent for their child's participation. Upon receiving consent, the student(s) will be asked to participate and then given an assent form.

3. PROCEDURES

This is a case study research project. As indicated, subjects that will be asked to participate are current clients of the researcher whose treatment currently involves exploring culture and identity formation. Research information will be gathered from regular and unaltered therapy sessions taking place at the school, meaning that their treatment will not be altered. Process notes will be recorded, work will be photographed, and themes and symbols will be coded according to cultural risk factors. Researcher aims to have the data collection completed by the end of March 2014. Researcher will then begin an analysis of the data according to the following research questions:

1. What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural risk factors?
2. What symbols and themes present in relation to cultural protective factors?
3. How do these themes and symbols inform treatment?
4. How does art therapy benefit treatment and academic performance in a school-based setting?
5. How did these themes and symbols play out in the therapeutic relationship?

4. RISKS / BENEFITS

Because the treatment is not being altered there is no direct benefit of the subject being in the research, other than the researcher's heightened attention towards the client.

The subject's willingness to participate may or may not affect the therapeutic relationship. Clients who choose not to participate may project onto the therapist/researcher their discomfort in choosing not to participate. Conversely, clients may see the research as an opportunity to get closer to the therapist/researcher. This will be monitored and dealt with in session and in clinical supervision until completion of data collection at the end of March 2014.

5. CONFIDENTIALITY

Subjects will be given pseudonyms to protect identity and confidentiality. Progress notes will also use the pseudonym to protect confidentiality. In the research data analysis, discussion, or other portions of the paper, pseudonym, gender, age, race/ethnic group, and academic grade level will identify subjects. For subject artwork, names will be covered when photographed and stored on the school campus in a locked file cabinet. Photographed images will be uploaded to a computer and deleted from the camera; they will be password protected on the computer. The name of the school and its location will not be disclosed to further protect confidentiality.

6. *INFORMED CONSENT*

   See attached form; will be provided to parents in Spanish as well as English.

7. *STUDENT RESEARCH*

   N/A.

8. *RENEWAL APPLICATIONS*

   N/A

9. *PAYMENTS*

   N/A

10. *PSYCHOLOGY SUBJECT POOL*

    N/A

11. *QUALIFICATIONS AND TRAINING*

    The student has completed the Human Subjects Protections Training (See attached certificate) and is currently enrolled in the Research Methods course (MFTH691). Beginning in the Spring 2014 semester, the researcher will be enrolled in the Research/Clinical Paper course (MFTH 696).

12. *RANDOMIZATION*

    N/A

13. *USE OF DECEPTION*

    N/A

14. *QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS*

    N/A

15. *PHYSICIAN INTERACTIONS*

    N/A

16. SUBJECT SAFETY

Photographs of artwork will be taken to include in the research, however the artwork will be destroyed upon completion of the research. Pseudonyms will be used in the research to protect the subject's identity.

17. *REDUNDANCY*

N/A

18. *COUNSELING*

N/A, client is already in therapy with researcher.

19. *SAFEGUARDING IDENTITY*

N/A

20. *ADVERTISEMENTS*

N/A

21. *FOREIGN RESEARCH*

N/A

22. *EXEMPTION CATEGORIES (45 CFR 46.101(b) 1-6)*

N/A

Please deliver to: Julie Paterson, IRB Coordinator, University Hall, Suite 1718 or jpaterso@lmu.edu.

Experimental Subject Bill of Rights

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Experimental Subjects Bill of Rights

Pursuant to California Health and Safety Code §24172, I understand that I have the following rights as a participant in a research study:

1. I will be informed of the nature and purpose of the experiment.

2. I will be given a description of any attendant discomforts and risks to be reasonably expected from the study.

3. I will be given an explanation of any benefits to be expected from the study, if applicable.

4. I will be given an opportunity to ask any questions concerning the study or the procedures involved.

5. I will be instructed that consent to participate in the research study may be withdrawn at any time and that I may discontinue participation in the study without prejudice to me.

6. I will be given a copy of the signed and dated written consent form.

7. I will be given the opportunity to decide to consent or not to consent to the study without the intervention of any element of force, fraud, deceit, duress, coercion, or undue influence on my decision.

Informed Consent

LOYOLA MARYMOUNT UNIVERSITY

Informed Consent Form

Date of Preparation: January 14, 2014

Loyola Marymount University

Understanding the Influence of Latino Culture on Academic Performance in Los Angeles.

1) I hereby authorize Piera Carfagno to include me (my child/ward) in the following research study titled: Latino Cultural Implications for Art Therapy: The Influence of Cultural Risk Factors and Academic Performance in High School.

2) I have been asked to participate on a research project, which is designed to identify themes and symbols in the artwork of Latino high school students looking to recognize the influence of Latino cultural risk factors on behavior and academic performance. This will last for approximately two to three months, concluding April 4th, 2014.

3) It has been explained to me that the reason for my inclusion in this project is that I am a student of the Latino culture between the ages of 14 and 18.

4) I understand that if I am a subject, I will continue with regular counseling sessions and have the ability to withdraw from the research at any time. My artwork will be photographed and used as a part of data collection.

   The investigator will not alter treatment and will supply art materials as usual. The investigator will also maintain the regular meeting time and protect my identity by using a pseudonym and my grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. The investigator will also keep artwork locked in a file cabinet and will delete photographs of artwork from the camera. They will be saved on a computer that is password protected.

   These procedures have been explained to me by Piera Carfagno.

5) I understand that my artwork will be photographed in the process of the research procedure. It has been explained to me that these photographs will be used for teaching and/or research purposes only and that my identity will not be disclosed. I have been assured that my name in these photographs will be covered. I understand that I have the right to review the images taken to determine whether they should be used as part of the study or not.

6) I understand that the study described above may involve risks and/or discomforts. My willingness to participate may or may not affect how I view the therapeutic relationship. It is possible that I may feel discomfort in the therapeutic relationship if I choose not to participate. On the other hand, I may see the research as an opportunity to get closer to the therapist/researcher. I understand that I am able to ask about this in session at any time.

7) I also understand that the possible benefit of participating in the study is increased self-awareness and understanding my culture. There may also be no direct benefit to participating in the study since treatment is not being altered.

8) I understand that Piera Carfagno, who can be reached at 310 – 836 – 1223 ext. 830, will answer any questions I may have at any time concerning details of the procedures performed as part of this study.

9) If the study design or the use of the information is to be changed, I will be so informed and my consent reobtained.

10) I understand that I have the right to refuse to participate in, or to withdraw from this research at any time without prejudice to (e.g., continuation of weekly sessions).

11) I understand that circumstances may arise which might cause the investigator to terminate my participation before the completion of the study.

12) I understand that no information that identifies me will be released without my separate consent except as specifically required by law.

13) I understand that I have the right to refuse to answer any question that I may not wish to answer.

14) I understand that if I have any further questions, comments, or concerns about the study or the informed consent process, I may contact David Hardy, Ph.D. Chair, Institutional Review Board, 1 LMU Drive, Suite 3000, Loyola Marymount University, Los Angeles CA 90045-2659 (310) 258-5465, david.hardy@lmu.edu.

15) In signing this consent form, I acknowledge receipt of a copy of the form, and a copy of the "Subject's Bill of Rights".

Subject's Signature _____ Date _____

Witness _____ Date _____

OR

Subject is a minor (age_____), or is unable to sign because _____

_____.

Mother/Father/Guardian _____ Date _____